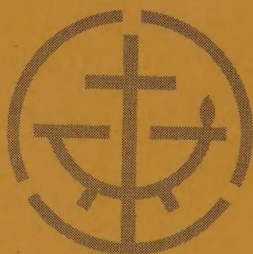


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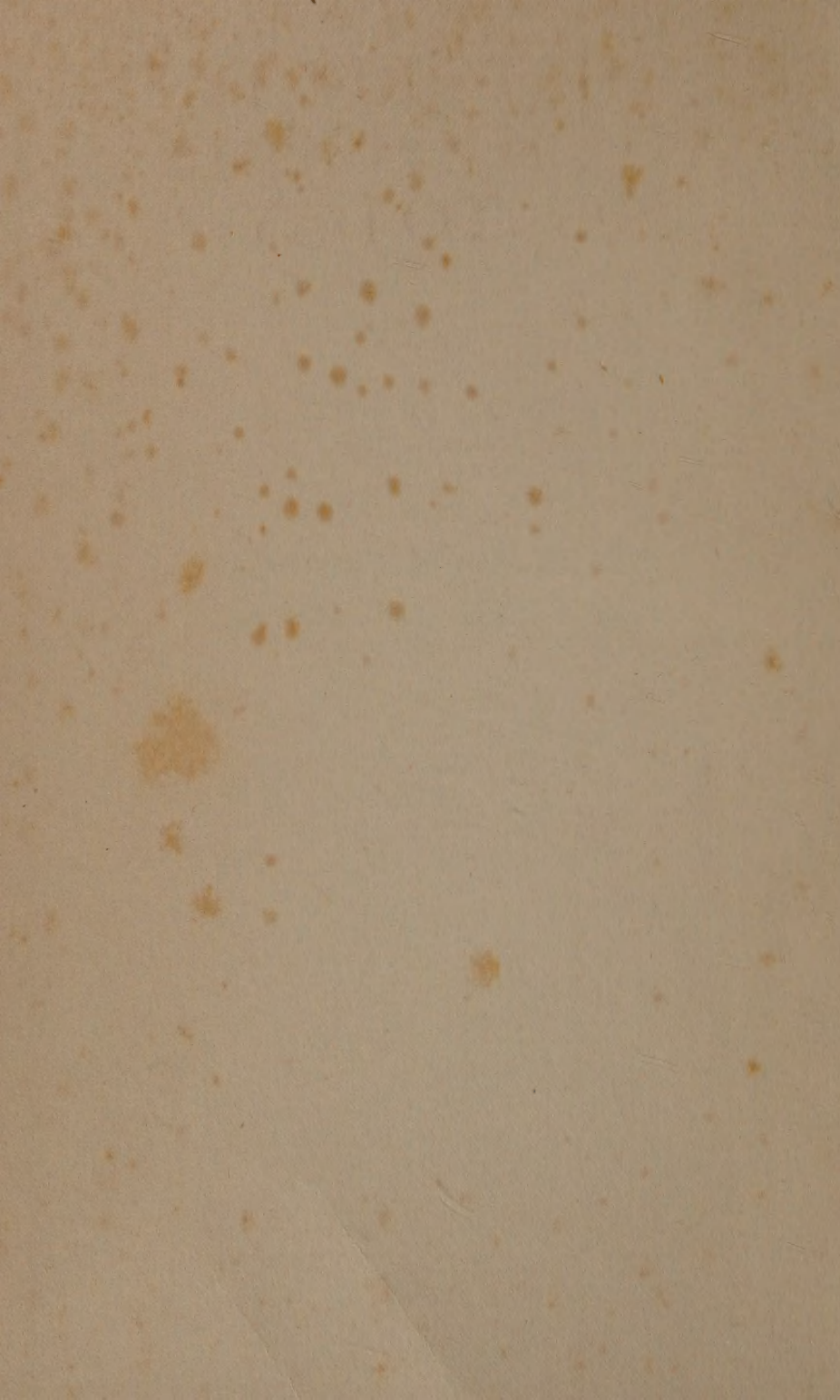
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THE HISTORIC FAITH IN
THE LIGHT OF TO-DAY



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PREFACE

IN John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* it is related that the pilgrims came one day on a man with his sword drawn, and his face all bloody, whose name was Valiant-for-truth, who gave account of himself as follows: "Now as I was in my way, there were three men did beset me, and propounded unto me these three things: 1. Whether I would become one of them. 2. Or go back from whence I came. 3. Or die upon the place. . . . Then these three, to wit, Wildhead, Inconsiderate and Pragmatic, drew upon me, and I also drew upon them. So we fell to it, one against three, for the space of above three hours. They have left upon me, as you see, some of the marks of their valour, and have also carried away with them some of mine. They are but just now gone. . . ." Then said Great-heart to Mr. Valiant-for-truth, "Let me see thy sword." So he showed it him. When he had taken it in his hand, and looked thereon awhile, he said, "Ha! it is a right Jerusalem blade." "It is so. . . . Its edges will never blunt."

Valiant-for-truth is the Christian controversialist; the Bible is the right Jerusalem blade; and wildheaded recriminations, inconsiderate attempts to defend the indefensible or on the other hand a reckless evacuation of ground that is part of the heritage of the faith, and pragmatism—a haughty dogmatism that will not weigh difficulties nor quote original authorities—these are the dangers that beset every defender of every creed, and may make him do more harm than an avowed opponent. Because some apologetics for Christianity have not escaped these disasters; because some others do not quite catch the interest of the modern student type, these chapters are written, in the earnest hope that wildheadedness and inconsiderateness and pragmatism will not be found to mar their usefulness.

Our aim then is to lay facts and arguments concerning the fundamentals of the Christian faith before young men and women with a modern education who think and read for themselves. We shall write as for those who have no special

knowledge of any of the subjects dealt with, but shall hope to whet their appetite to search out more for themselves. A certain small number of books are therefore mentioned, where those interested in any particular line of study may follow it out further.

Scriptural quotations are usually from the Revised Version.

Greatheart. Then said the guide, "Why did you not cry out, that some might have come in for your succour?"

Valiant-for-truth. "So I did, to my King, who, I knew, could hear, and afford invisible help, and that was sufficient for me."

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CHAPTER I

The Riddle of the Universe

THE world is very wonderful, and very puzzling. Every student of natural science, who has a soul, must have found it so. There is its vastness. It is one thing to know that you can cross the Atlantic in twenty-four hours by aeroplane, but it is another to stand on some Cornish headland, and looking out over the ocean try to gauge its immensity, especially when a great gale is driving the waves ashore and flinging the spray thirty feet high up the face of the cliffs. Without going to other lands to seek out their wonders, one may feel something of the awe of nature even in the comparatively quiet scenery of our own little island. To take a familiar illustration, who could look for the first time unmoved on the view of Snowdon on a favourable day from the road below Pen-y-gwryd, or from Capel Curig, or at a greater distance from the moors above Pentrevoelas? What a massive, majestic pile it is, and how wondrously fashioned!

Then the world is so vast and inscrutable, in the parts that have never been seen by mortal eye. What is the huge Antarctic continent like, that Shackleton hoped to cross in 1914? What lies beneath our feet, a few miles down, in the core of the earth? There appears to be at least a stratum of molten rock, because it is proved that mountains have "roots," but we do not know for certain whether the centre is solid or fluid, or what elements are present in it. And our world is such a small part of the universe. The sun is more than ninety million miles away. The stars are infinitely further. It is supposed that the universe is shaped like a vast disc, all in rapid motion; when we look out upon the Milky Way we are looking towards the periphery of the disc. The distance of Alpha Centauri and a few other stars can be measured, but the vast majority are so far away that the light which reaches us from them, in spite of the fact that it has been

travelling at a rate of 186,000 miles a second, has been years upon its journey.

Then, too, the world and the universe are so old. Man's little day, even the whole period of human history, seems such a flash in eternity. Yet they had a beginning, and science proves that they will have an end. The age of the earth used to be estimated by the physicists as ten million years, but the discovery of radium and radio-activity, and other considerations, have greatly disturbed the data on which the computation was based. It is possible to classify the stars chemically by the lines they show in the spectrum; it is believed the presence of gases such as hydrogen and helium indicates a young star; as they grow older, metals and minerals appear, and in the oldest visible stars carbon can be demonstrated. Calculations have been published as to how much longer the sun's light will last. So there is youth, and prime, and old age, amongst the heavenly bodies.

Then there is something deeply impressive in the *force* wielded by Nature, such force as could in the year A.D. 79 blow out one side of the crater of Vesuvius (Monte Somma), and in August, 1883, completely reduce to dust the whole island of Krakatoa. There is plainly visible in the Avon Gorge, Clifton, a huge thrust-fault where the great bluff of limestone on which the Suspension Bridge rests has been driven up 1,100 feet over the rocks to the north of it. What terrific power this bears witness to! Close by is an ancient beach-deposit with boulders weighing six tons and more, thoroughly rounded by some mighty wave-action.

Very different, but no less wonderful, are the phenomena seen in the world of life. Here, perhaps, the two most striking facts are the bewildering diversity of species, and withal the remarkable adaptation, both structural and functional, of each creature for the life that it has to live and the place that it has to fill. This is seen not only in monsters like the elephant, but in the little Volvox and Hydra of pond-water, and in the complicated life-cycle of a malarial parasite. In 1909 Professor Shipley estimated that there are 790,000 species of living animals described, including 9,955 mammals and nearly half a million insects. No zoologist can pretend to range over such a vast field; he has to specialize on a part of it, one on sponges, another on monkeys, another on butterflies and so on. Yet any one of these creatures would repay years of study. Consider even the humble flea, its horny cuticle resisting all but a severe nip, its jumping powers so out of

proportion to its size, its inconspicuous colour, its sharp proboscis, the inflaming substance which it injects to bring blood to the part, its instinct to lie still when it is in a sheltered corner, its power of reproducing its kind through a life-cycle of egg and larva, each of which presents a new set of problems and adaptations of its own. How little we know of the physics or chemistry or other processes that underlie one of these functions! Then consider how the bat, mammal as it is, is fitted for a bird-like life, and the whale, another mammal, for existence in the ocean. Surely, at some time or other, when one has taken an animal's life, there has been a qualm of conscience. "You could not make it, you do not understand it, and why should you destroy it?"

All this demands an explanation. Why is it so, how came it to be, by what means does it all persist, and what will be the end of it all? The old Hebrew revelation or, as some say, tradition, accepted by Christianity, says, "In the beginning, God created." Bergson invokes creative evolution. Modern scientists generally look to evolution brought about by incessant variations in some respect or another from the normal type; some of these variations are preserved, if useful, by natural selection; others, which are harmful, are eliminated by the greater liability of the animal or plant to fall a victim to its enemies, or to perish from lack of nutriment or other causes. According to de Vries and his followers, evolution may proceed at certain periods in the history of a species by sudden considerable leaps, and there is some geological evidence, when a species is followed up through a continuous rock-formation, of periods of stability and periods of instability and change, well seen, for example, in the corals and brachiopods of the Carboniferous Limestone studied by the late Dr. Vaughan. That some of the variations may follow a regular order is shown by Mendel's law. Haeckel and the militant rationalists maintain that these relatively simple and intelligible processes will explain all; that there is no need of God in the universe. This is the great riddle. What will the answer be?

No Christian, however opposed he may be to evolutionary doctrines, will deny, after careful consideration of the evidence, that there have been, and still are, progressive changes going on in the sun and stars. Nor will he be disposed to find serious fault with the statement that species are not nearly as fixed as used to be supposed. Whatever the older generation of theologians may have thought, the Bible never teaches that each of our 790,000 species was created separately. Between

a fox-terrier, a Pomeranian, a dachshund, and a St. Bernard there are great and evident differences, far greater in the eye of the non-scientist than between many species of other animals, for instance, the song-thrush, red-wing, and missel-thrush, but it is practically certain that these varieties of dogs were all derived from a common ancestor. It used to be supposed that species could be separated by the inter-breeding test, but a horse and an ass, a canary and a goldfinch, a dog and a wolf, will produce offspring, and though sometimes the offspring is sterile this does not always obtain (the dog-wolf cross may be fertile), and no absolute separation of species can be made in this way. Dandelions grown in the lowlands are tall and slender; those reared in the uplands from the same seed are very different in appearance, with short stems, long roots, smaller hairy leaves, and bigger, brighter flowers.

On lonely islands, far from other land, to which animals can only be transplanted at very long intervals, by some remote chance, and perhaps ages ago, one may find some very strange species, like the dodo of Mauritius, a great helpless bird that was rapidly exterminated when men and dogs came to the island. On the island of Oahu, there is a peculiar family of snail, with a different species in every valley. On the Galapagos islands, there are or used to be some gigantic tortoises, distantly related to tortoises on the South American continent, but with a different species on every island. Evidently the original immigration was long, long ago. The geological records of past ages furnish some most interesting series of species, showing by every gradation how from one variety found in the lowest and oldest beds a number of quite different forms have gradually, or more or less suddenly, developed. The best known examples of this are a series of Trilobites worked out by Beecher, and the case of a Planorbis, a freshwater snail, found in an ancient lake bed near Steinheim. Here the original form yielded four different series, one of which again yielded three. The genealogical tree is quite clear (Hilgendorf). The ancestry of the horse has been worked out by five or six stages back to a creature in the Eocene ¹ the size of a fox, but this is admittedly very speculative. There are historical examples of new varieties appearing suddenly and breeding true, such as the species of evening primrose, *Oenothera lamarckiana*, observed by de Vries. The merino sheep is said to have arisen suddenly in this way, and also a famous breed of royal Hanoverian horses.

¹ See geological table. p. 44.

A certain amount of evolution amongst animals and plants, therefore, may be regarded as undeniable, and opinion will only differ as to how far it may have extended. When, for instance, we seek to explain the origin of the vertebrates, in spite of Gaskell's ingenious theory, the evidence becomes very shadowy.

But the admission of all this does not make it unnecessary to believe in God. Even granting for the sake of argument that all animals go back to one common ancestor, and that natural selection, of which we shall have more to say presently, working over countless millions of years, has been active in perpetuating favourable variations and eliminating unsuitable ones, there remains far too much to be explained, which may be set out under five headings.

(1) ORIGINS. How came matter into existence in the first place? how came life? and how came the subtle but unmistakable difference between man and animal?

As we have briefly indicated, the evidence goes to show that the stars, the sun, and the earth had a beginning, are undergoing gradual changes as they lose their heat, and will have an end. The agnostic may *declare* that matter was from the beginning, but it is against the evidence, such little as we know of it.

As far as we can tell, no new life has appeared upon the earth since man took his place thereon. All attempts to create life nowadays in the laboratory have failed, in spite of a few claims to the contrary. Chemistry has not so far succeeded in manufacturing the proteins—the chemical substances which occur in the blood and tissues of the living and dead body, and even if that were done, it would not solve the problem of bringing in life. The gap between the living and the dead is wide, unbridgeable. One can only speak, of course, for oneself, but it seems far easier to believe that life first came by the gift of a Designing Intelligence—God—than that it could ever have arisen from the mere play of chemical and physical forces, whether in the rocks, or in the ocean, the air, or some element of whose existence we are unaware. This difficulty is quite frankly felt even by some of those scientific writers who are most determined to make evolution, natural selection and the like, explain all things without the necessity of looking to God. Even Weissmann¹ is constrained to allow that “we must honestly confess that it is mere assumption when we take it for granted that there are only chemico-physical differences between

¹ *Theory of Evolution*, Vol. II, pp. 369–370.

the two " (the living and the inorganic). " It cannot be proved, in the meantime, that there is not another unknown power in the living protoplasm, a vitalistic principle, a life-force."

Surely, further, we must postulate a special creation of man, because although man's body does not differ so very markedly from that of the other mammalia, and especially from that of the great apes (though there are of course plenty of anatomical distinctions), yet the realm of mind is as far superior to the realm of body as a live lion is to a stone-carved one. The Christian believes further that man alone possesses a capacity for eternity, what the old writers called an " immortal soul," and a faculty that can respond to God. But waiving that, it seems incontestable that there is a difference, not in degree but in kind, between the animal and the man on the score of mind alone. In spite of the popular stories of animal intelligence, and their capacity for learning circus tricks, careful scientific investigation, by Professor Lloyd Morgan and others, tends to enhance rather than to diminish the gap between the mind of a man and that of a brute. It is all very well to say that there is less difference between a gorilla and a Central African native, than between that savage and an Englishman. The late Dr. Holman Bentley brought over to this country from the Congo a raw African native, reared in a heathen village, who had become his right-hand man, and used to stain blood-films for him, and examine them microscopically for malarial parasites. Try to teach that to a gorilla ! If a human being, wherever born, is put into decent surroundings from infancy, and suitably educated, one will learn the difference between man and beast ; the man is educable, the beast is not, beyond a very low level. How paltry are the circus tricks of the ape compared with the accomplishments of an educated human being, be he white, black, or yellow ! If there is a fundamental, essential difference between the ape and the man, it must have had a beginning, and that beginning must have had a cause, which we believe demands the creative act of God. " The Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." There are, of course, many fascinating problems as to the how and the when, but they do not concern us at this juncture. We shall return to them in Chapter III.

Great capital has recently been made out of the fact that the precipitin test shows no difference between the blood of an ape and of a man, which is held to prove that they are chemically

identical. But newer tests (agglutinins) have since been made use of, and it is safe to say that no surgeon in the light of our present day knowledge would be so foolhardy as to transfuse any large quantity of an ape's blood into a man.

Nor will any one who has any real acquaintance with the facts of human and animal embryology be disposed to accept without a great deal of qualification the old evolutionary theory that every man in his development climbs up his own genealogical tree. Far too much has been founded on the "gill-arches" of the embryo. That the development of an animal may furnish a valuable clue as to its proper place and line of descent is of course well known, especially in the case of certain degenerate parasites such as *Sacculina*; but there are phases in human embryology that cannot well be supposed to correspond to anything in the ancestry. As Prof. Kellogg has written, "The Recapitulation theory of Fritz Müller and Haeckel is chiefly conspicuous now as a skeleton on which to hang innumerable exceptions. . . . The Recapitulation theory is mostly wrong."¹

(2) THE ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN. Henry Drummond says in one of his books, that we ought not to see God only in gaps. If He is visible at all—and "the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen"—His hand will be evident everywhere, and not only at a few critical stages. Our present contention is, that the animals and plants of to-day (and, we might add, of the past geological ages) did not attain their marvellous fittedness, in structure, function, and instinct, for the part they have to play in life by blind chance, nor by the progressive but unintelligent force of creative evolution, but that God foresaw the end from the beginning, and used means to perfect it.

The alternative, of course, is the theory of gradual evolution, originated by Charles Darwin and A. R. Wallace, and restated for the twentieth century by Weissmann and many others. The main contention is that animals and plants incessantly vary from the normal, much or little; that favourable variations have a better chance of surviving in the struggle for food and space and against enemies, and pass on their improvements to their offspring, whereas unfavourable variations do not survive. It would take centuries and millenniums, and an

¹ Kellogg, *Darwinism To-day*, pp. 18, 21. See also Prof. Sidgwick, *Darwin and Modern Science*, Darwin centenary vol., p. 174, and Art. "Embryology" *Encycl. Brit.*

enormous number of individuals, to produce much change, but the biologist is willing to make unlimited demands on time, and to push back the origins of life on this planet hundreds of millions of years. There are other factors, called by Weissmann germinal selection and histonal selection, and Darwin's sexual selection, also to be taken into account in applying the theory, which need not be explained just here.

That natural selection has been one of the methods by which God has worked out His great designs we think highly probable. By this means an enormous number of most interesting animals have become extinct, both within historic times, and in past geological ages. The dodo of Mauritius and the moa of New Zealand, the mammoth of Siberia, and the lions, bears and rhinoceroses whose bones have been found in such quantities in the caves of Great Britain, and which are represented in so many museums, are a few out of many examples. In many of these cases it was probably the advent of man that led to their extermination; only those animals that could accommodate themselves to live with man survived. But long before man's time, the rocks are full of the remains of creatures that perished in the struggle for existence and left no descendants, such as the graptolites and trilobites, the toothed birds, and the great sea-lizards, Plesiosaurus and Ichthyosaurus. Insects embedded in amber, birds with beautifully preserved feathers, ferns in the Coal Measures—every variety of creature is known to have existed in bygone ages, and the species died out, and never came back. One seldom if ever finds *modern* species in the older rocks, though a few genera such as Lingula, a shellfish, appear in the very earliest fossiliferous rocks and still survive.

Further, creatures now living seem in many cases to have reached their present characters by a process of natural selection. One of the most convincing arguments for this is to be found in the phenomena of mimicry and protective colouring. One of us well remembers a visit to the aquarium at Naples, and a tank apparently empty, with a sandy bottom; for a few *centesimi*, the attendant was delighted to stir up the sand with a stick, when a flat-fish arose and swam about, with its back so exactly like the sand that it was next to impossible to see it when it lay still on the bottom, as its instinct prompted it to do. In another tank were some prawns so exquisitely transparent that had it not been for the food in their stomachs they would have escaped notice altogether. There are caterpillars just like twigs or bits of stick, and butterflies, the surface

of whose wings when closed shows the most beautiful imitation of a dead leaf, stem, veins and all (the infolded upper surfaces of the wings are quite differently coloured). The ptarmigan is white like the snow in the winter, and speckled like a heather-clad moor in the summer. On parallel lines, we have the device adopted by a non-stinging English gnat (*Cheironomus*), which closely resembles the stinging mosquito ; and by the hover-fly, which is banded in colours very like a bee or wasp, which it also resembles in build ; birds that are shy of a stinging insect will not be likely to prey on these cunning creatures that trick themselves out like sheep in wolves' clothing. One is almost bound to conclude that all these devices, and scores of similar ones that will occur to every nature-lover and may be seen in any Natural History museum, must owe their perfection to the fact that the animals whose mimicry was most successful were more likely to escape death from enemies, and if the favourable variation breeds true as it is apt to do, the simulation would become more perfect generation after generation.

So much may be admitted, and a great deal more, for there is much evidence of natural selection besides, but it becomes a very different matter when it is claimed that natural selection will explain everything. It seems incredible that man himself, mind and body, can have come into being without a fore-seeing Intelligence working to that end. Many functions in animals, also, seem to require some such "directivity," as this intelligent force is called.

In the first place, direct observation or experiment, on the whole, has contributed remarkably little to the establishment of the theory. It is true that the Colorado beetle has shown small changes in the offspring, as a result of heat and dryness (Tower), and a fly called *Drosophila* has given similar results (Morgan). But the positive evidence is very scanty and insignificant, and the negative is extensive and impressive. Hundreds of animals and plants have been removed from one habitat to another, so that they have had to face a new climate, a new soil, new food, and new enemies, but the almost invariable rule is that they are little if at all affected thereby. Certainly new species do not appear. Even if there are changes, as with the dandelion in the uplands, the plant or animal promptly reverts to type when it is restored to its original home. And these experiments have been going on for centuries, and on a colossal scale. There are more cedars of Lebanon in England than in Syria ; the horse-chestnut is quite at home in its new

Western home with us, the sparrow has been introduced into America, and the rabbit into Australia, and they have flourished exceedingly, without changing type. Scores of such illustrations could be given, and exceptions are hard to find. If it is objected that it takes centuries to effect any bodily change, the reply is that artificial changes in the surroundings are likely to be more sudden and more drastic than the slow alterations of Nature, and should act more quickly; also, that on the Mutation theory new varieties may appear quite suddenly.

Next, it must be remembered that according to theory, every new organ and function has been acquired by a series of gradual improvements working over many generations. When the new organ or function reaches a certain stage of perfection, it will, of course, be of substantial value to the animal in the struggle for life, and it is easy to suppose that it may be preserved by the killing off of the more poorly equipped. But the real difficulty lies in the earlier stages, when it is quite valueless, and may be positively detrimental, as by making demands on the blood supply. According to the theory, useless parts are going to be eliminated by germinal selection and histonal selection; that is to say, nutriment cannot be spared either within the germ-cell or in the tissues of the body for useless organs. To take a simple illustration, we can readily see the value of the elephant's trunk now that it is long enough to reach to the ground, but what possible use could a nose three or four inches long have been to the animal, even if it was not so tall as it is now? If the trunk appeared full length one day, by a sudden mutation, what made it so appear?

Let us take a few further illustrations of the difficulty that has to be explained. Some very diverse fish, one like an eel (*Gymnotus*), a creature shaped like a barbed arrow called *Torpedo*, and one or two others, have the extraordinary power of giving severe electric shocks. In the Naples aquarium already mentioned, one may see a huge full-grown *Torpedo*, and may even take a shock, for a few *centesimi*, from a small one. These shocks will stun or kill enemies, or fish required as food. Now it is easy to see the utility of this strange weapon when it is fully developed, but it would not have been worth preserving when the electric potential was still very small. It is true that all muscles and glands produce electrical changes when they are active, and apparently the electric organs in fish are greatly modified muscles or glands, but the potential in ordinary vertebrates is so small that special means are required to detect it. But if a directing Intelligence saw the

end from the beginning, all is clear. It seems incredible on any other theory that three kinds of fish, zoologically very far apart, should all have arrived at the same strange mechanism. There are other examples of widely diverse creatures, as far as their relationships and internal structures go, furnishing a curiously exact copy of a successful type. For instance, there is a mole amongst the Insectivora, and another amongst the Marsupials; there is a marsupial "wolf"; and the flying lemur, the flying squirrel, and the flying phalanger show a strange external resemblance. It is as though a craftsman modelled a favourite design in wood, plaster and bronze.

Sunlight does not penetrate to the bottom of the oceans; below a certain depth they are absolutely dark. Dredgings show that deep-sea fish adopt all sorts of strange devices under these circumstances. Some of them carry lamps complete with nerves and lenses, capable of being turned off and on at will, and focused in any direction (certain Schizopod crustacea, shrimps, and fish described by Chun). Other fish have a light just over the mouth, to attract unwary little fishes in! One cephalod has about twenty large ruby, blue and silvery lamps like gleaming jewels. It seems difficult to believe that the earlier stages in evolving such devices could have been worth preserving by natural selection, acting alone.

In the human ear, according to the most probable view of its function (Gray's modification of the Helmholtz theory), there is a set of strings of varying length and tension, like the strings of a piano. On each string rests a pillar-like cell with some stiff bristles at the top, which are embedded in a sort of pad or damper. Each of these cells is connected by nerve-fibres with the brain. When the note C is sounded in the outside air, 256 vibrations a second fall on the drum of the ear. But sound waves have little power behind them; they must be magnified to overcome the inertia of the delicate mechanism of the internal ear. There is a double provision to meet this difficulty: one is an arrangement of levers called the ossicles, and the other gives us a second much smaller drum behind the first, so that the net result is to increase the power sixtyfold. Thus 256 vibrations a second are transmitted to the piano strings of the basilar membrane, and the C string vibrates up and down. The bristles are pressed to and fro in the overlying pad, and the nerve-fibres supplying that particular set of cells signify to the brain that a message is being received from the C string. Once again, it is easy to see the beauty and value of all this when we are shown the finished article, but it is

putting an extraordinary strain on credulity to be sure that every one of the thousands of steps that had to be taken to reach this end-result was of sufficient value to the possessor to survive. Enormous advances would have to be made relatively suddenly, before natural selection would begin to take care of them. It seems easier to believe that these advances were the result of "directivity," an intelligent design working to a foreseen end, rather than to attribute them to blind chance.

One more example. Take the case of a piano player. The muscles that move the fingers are contracting and relaxing incessantly, perhaps for half an hour at a time. This involves both chemical and mechanical changes in the muscle fibres, and when we consider the rapidity with which they are brought about, and the wonderful way in which the chemical substance which "explodes" at every contraction is built up to be ready for the next call upon it in less than a second, we are left bewildered. The engineer's workshop which has produced the ear demands less intelligent supervision than the chemical factory which has devised this most wonderful "explosive" substance. And was every intermediate chemical body, from which this was "evolved," sufficiently useful to be worth preserving?

We repeat, it saves enormous difficulties if we accept that the world of life is the work of a Creator, and is *not* the fortuitous result of the interaction of natural forces; just as it is easier to believe that a watch was made by an intelligent workman, than to theorize that if one shook up together some silver, a spring, a piece of glass, some steel and some screws, etc., then after the ten-millionth shaking a watch might emerge complete. Darwin himself may be quoted in evidence. "There is a grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one"; and again, "The birth both of species and of the individual are equally parts of that grand sequence of events which our minds refuse to accept as the result of blind chance."¹ Lord Kelvin, President of the Royal Society and prince of British scientists, declared at University College in 1903, "Science positively demands creative power." He related that once walking with Liebig, the great physiological chemist, in the fields, he asked him if he could believe that the grass and flowers could have come into being as a result of

¹ *Origin of Species*, 6th edition, p. 429. *Descent of Man*, 1871, vol. ii, p. 396.

mere chemical forces. Liebig replied, "No, no more than I could believe that a book on botany describing them could grow by mere chemical forces."¹

(3) THE ARGUMENT FROM DEVELOPMENT. Every animal individual is derived from a single cell. Amongst vertebrates, this cell, the fertilized ovum, is formed by the union of two cells, the male being motile, and the female rounded and more stationary. The ovum, amongst the mammalia, is about 0.2 millimetres in diameter. Occupying its centre is a clear vesicular structure, the nucleus. When it is going to divide into two, some V-shaped bodies appear in the nucleus called chromosomes; in the human subject these are probably twenty-four in number, twelve derived from each parent. These chromosomes convey the heredity, and from that tiny cell, given proper nutriment, the body of the full-grown animal or man is developed. This is one of the most wonderful miracles in Nature. So small and so alike are the ova, to start with, that one cannot even tell which will produce an animal, or what sort of animal, and which a man. Yet somehow there lies the germ of all the organs, all the functions, of the species; there, even that which will bring about the strange likeness of child and parent—the stature, the facial expression, the tone of voice, and in certain cases even the deformities and defects, such as the "bleeder" tendency, which only affects the boys and is only transmitted by the females, but which has been traced through certain families for two hundred years. As Dr. A. R. Wallace writes, "The vast life-world, with its myriad forms, each one originating in a single cell, yet growing by cell-division into such marvels of variety, of use and of beauty, does absolutely require some non-mechanical mind and power as its efficient cause."² The stages by which the one cell develops into the complete animal, the process of building up each organ, are mostly well known; it is the driving force and the directivity that seem so baffling.

An attempt has been made to account for the phenomenon. Weissmann believed that each of the chromosomes contained a certain number of particles, which he called "ids," each of which was responsible for the production of a particular organ or function. The trouble is, however, that there is not room enough in the nucleus for all the ids that would be necessary,

¹ *Christian Apologetics*, pp. 25, 26.

² *The World of Life*, 1910, p. 392.

as several critics have proved by calculation. On this Weissmann has a luminous paragraph. "I made a calculation of this kind, and I arrived at figures which seemed rather too small for the requirements of the theory. This has been regarded as a proof that I disregard the facts for the sake of my theory, but it should rather be asked whether the size of the atoms and molecules is a fact. . . . We *must* assume determinants, and consequently the germ-plasm must have room for these."¹ Mathematics must be assumed to lie, apparently, rather than acknowledge the possibility of God! Needless to say, even if the ids were proved to exist, it would go but little way to solve the real problem.

Wallace, co-founder with Darwin of the Evolution theory and a front-rank authority on biology, has a most pertinent illustration bearing on the whole subject of this chapter. Suppose observers from another world came to inspect this planet through a telescope, but they either did not or would not see any human beings. They would see matter everywhere in motion, but no cause for the motion. If they looked at a lumber-camp, they would see dead trees on the ground, and living trees being fretted away at the base by a saw, and falling. They would observe the branches and leaves disappear, and the trunks, mere logs now, float down rivers, progress along roads, and split up into planks. Then they would take unto themselves stones and glass, and grow into a house, a church, a bridge. The whole process could be exactly reported on, but the source of the energy and the directive mind would be a matter for argument. Some of the observers would talk about the wonderful properties of trees, and expect that if they could be studied with a better telescope or analysed by a better chemist, everything would become intelligible. Others would never be satisfied until they had located the master-timber-cutter or the architect.² So some modern scientists seem determined not to see God, whereas others see Him everywhere. Edison, the great American inventor, has lately declared himself as belonging to the latter group—"I can no more doubt the existence of an Intelligence that is running things than I do the existence of myself."³

(4) THE INORGANIC WORLD. Supposing that natural selection and the like will explain all things in the world of life, what shall we say when we find the same wonderful evidence

¹ *Theory of Evolution*, vol. ii., p. 157.

² *World of Life*, p. 296.

³ *Times*, Jan. 15, 1921.

of design in the inorganic world—the world of the non-living, where natural selection cannot apply? The elements of which the earth is composed, the oxygen and nitrogen of the air, the hydrogen, carbon, sulphur, phosphorus and iron of the rocks, are just those which are essential for the structure of almost every living substance, animal or vegetable. The sun supplies the necessary light and heat, and its disappearance by night allows for needful sleep. The earth is neither too hot nor too cold. As geology teaches us, there has always been a sort of balance between land and water; if at any time since the world was inhabited by living creatures, there had been all land, or all water, life as we know it would have been annihilated.

Perhaps it is in the strange properties of water that the design shows itself most clearly. Though so unlike the gases, oxygen and hydrogen, of which it is composed, it is singularly suitable for the great part that it plays in relation to life. It is not too readily decomposed; it dissolves many substances; although it will not conduct electricity itself, it will when salts are present in solution. This is probably a very important function in the animal body. Then, alone or almost alone amongst the thousands of fluids known to us, it reaches its greatest density not at its freezing-point, but 4°C . above, so that ponds and rivers and the sea freeze over at the top instead of at the bottom; if it obeyed the general law, all the creatures that live in water would be killed off every winter. By its expansion on freezing it has broken down the rocks (just as it sometimes bursts our household water-pipes), and so made soil, carved out cliffs and valleys, and made vegetation possible.

The flood of light that has been thrown recently on the nature of the atom by Sir J. J. Thomson, Mr. Aston and others, serves to show up in stronger relief the need for a mighty Intelligence in the inorganic world. It now appears that the atomic weights of the elements are nearly all whole numbers; when fractions are found, they appear to be due to admixture of two or more "isotopes," as in the case of chlorine and neon; also, that they are built up of primordial atoms of "protons" and "electrons" in particular numbers and combinations. What mighty Arithmetician has been at work here?

(5) THE ARGUMENT FROM BEAUTY. There is no conclusive scientific reason why the world should be beautiful; why the sky should be blue, the sunset golden, and the sunrise on the Alpine snows rose-coloured. Nor is it clear why crystals of snow, or of the various minerals, should take up their often

graceful shapes and shades of colour. It does not seem essential that the trees in spring should be vivid green, and russet and gold in the autumn—

“ I see o’er the hill and the lowland,
The sign of the golden rod,
And some of us call it Autumn,
And some of us call it God.”

There seems no adequate reason for the infinite variety and beauty of colouring and of scent of the flowers. True, colour and scent serve the necessary purpose of attracting insects, but a few prominent shapes and shades would apparently do as well. The explanation seems inadequate to bear all that has been rested upon it. Some coloured and sweet-smelling flowers are self-fertilizing, and some trees are wind fertilized, but these are beautiful too.

The magnificent colouring of the peacock butterfly, or of the red admiral, or the little common blue; the brilliance of the humming-birds, and the quieter grace of our own blue tit or grey wagtail; the song of the thrush, the nightingale, the blackcap, or the willow-wren—we know that Darwin tried to explain them all by sexual selection, but few naturalists will believe to-day that this is an adequate theory. The contention was, of course, that the best songster, or the gayest wooer, was most likely to captivate the other sex—usually in the animal world it is the male that is the fairer sex!—and so leave more descendants to perpetuate his attractions. But the theory demands too much in the way of an æsthetic taste, and also breaks down just where there is most to be explained. It might be more or less intelligible amongst the apes and higher mammals, where the brain is so well developed, and one male often takes unto himself many females and beats off all male competitors, but mammals are seldom beautifully coloured, or gifted with attractive voices or sweet odours. The blue patches on a big male baboon are more grotesque than admirable. Amongst birds, there is no great disparity in numbers between the sexes, and the pairs usually mate faithfully for a season if not for life, so that even the dingy bachelors, who might also be indifferent songsters, should still have no difficulty in getting unto themselves a wife and family! And finally, it is quite incredible that female butterflies can exercise any choice between, shall we say, a more and a less handsomely coloured male red admiral,

CONCLUSION. May we not take it as probable—certain—that the world as we see it has been made by God, and that one reason why He made it was for our use and for our education, and that we have been fitted to profit by it? The iron and copper was buried in the earth for human uses. The giant conifers and cycads of the Carboniferous forest-period were designed to provide us with coal. The immensity of the universe, the majesty of the mountains, oceans, earthquakes and thunderstorms, is to teach us the greater might of their Maker. The obvious antiquity of the geological world and of the stars is to educate us to His Eternity. The perfection in design even of the tiniest creature, even in those little likely to be discovered, is to show His painstaking wisdom and care. Beauty is to show forth *His* beauty and, that He designs that men should be joyful, not miserable. The vine is to figure the spiritual reality of the True Vine (John xv. 1). The caterpillar, the pupa and the perfect butterfly are to illustrate to us and help us to understand death and resurrection, both in the mystic sense of Romans vi. and at the end of our life on earth. We have only to try to imagine what intelligent thought there would be left to us, and how little language there would be suitable for conveying spiritual instruction, if the world showed us nothing but a Sahara desert, an unending calm and a featureless sky, with nothing living but ourselves, to see the absolute *necessity* for this wonderful Nature if men were ever to be educated in the things of God. The scientist says that God is unknowable, but He has used all these means to make Himself knowable, in part. “The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead” (Rom. i. 20). We do not say that there may not be other reasons why He has made things as they are, but that is beyond our ken.

That we may be able to profit by the wonderful display of His beauties and wisdom set before us in the natural world, God has endowed us with diverse physical powers such as colour vision, a wide range of perception of musical notes, and appreciation of a great variety of scents, as well as æsthetic tastes, and minds to reason. It is impossible to believe that the possession of good *colour* vision, a varied sense of smell, and æsthetic tastes can have been of any great value to humans in the struggle for existence for ages past, if indeed they ever were. No doubt the sense of smell for food, mates and enemies is far keener in some animals than in man, but there

is no evidence that they have our great variety; no doubt in some animals sight is better than in man, but can they distinguish and appreciate as many colours? There is no room in the human economy for useless functions; it would be difficult to mention one function or organ that is not certainly or probably useful (the vermiform appendix and pineal gland not being exceptions), and if colour vision, and a wide range of appreciation of musical tones, and of odours, have been preserved to us, together with the æsthetic sense, it must be for a good reason, but natural selection does not tell us what that reason is.

Do considerations like these in real life make men believe in God? We think so. Often the influence may be subconscious, but it is at work. Sometimes it comes in the form of a sudden revelation to the mind. Here is a striking example, as told by the man himself.

"I was in the railway-car," wrote one very aggressive communist and atheist orator, who for many years had been doing his utmost to pour scorn on Christianity in the Manchester district, "slowly climbing the wonderful Rocky Mountains. We had reached an altitude of 15,000 feet above the sea-level, an elevation to which the train had been gradually mounting, and here a magnificent prospect of indescribable grandeur burst upon our view; the sun, which shone brilliantly in that clear atmosphere, lighted up the snow to a whiteness that was dazzling. We had left Colorado 90 degrees in the shade, and here we were passing among snow-capped pinnacles, where eagles were sweeping past as the train slowly laboured up the heights; deep abysses, chasms and ravines surrounded us, millions of pines and fir-trees were growing on the mountain sides; and thousands of feet far down below, valleys, clothed with the richest verdure, added beauty to the scene. . . . The first definite thought was, 'Surely all this is not the result of fortuitous circumstances, blind chance, matter and force. . . . Might I, after all, have been mistaken?' I felt I must face this question. I fell upon my knees and cried 'O God, if Thou dost exist, reveal Thyself.' I asked for light, and it came like a flood."¹ The infidel book he was reading slipped from his knee, and after a period of search he became a devoted Christian worker, and is still continuing.

There is what appears at first sight to be a crushing retort to the conclusions we have been suggesting. The scientific

¹ T. Musgrave Reade, *Christ or Socialism*.

atheist loves to ask, "If God made the world, why did He make it so badly?" God and Nature seem to be at strife. She is red in tooth and claw with ravine.¹ Pain and death ask to be explained, and the existence of animals that live by preying on their weaker neighbours, and of snakes, and disease germs such as tubercle bacilli and malarial parasites. The giant carnivores seem so cruel. There is a wasp that stings a caterpillar in the head ganglion of the nervous system so as to paralyse without killing it, in order that its body may form fresh food for the larvæ that hatch out from the wasp's eggs. There is ugliness as well as beauty.

No doubt the difficulty has been greatly exaggerated, and especially the amount of pain and dread in the animal world. Dr. A. R. Wallace has a reassuring chapter on the subject, in which he concludes that animals feel much less pain than one would suppose. Appearances are deceptive. A man with a broken back may draw his foot away from a pin-prick that he does not feel; a frog with its head cut off makes the most convincing efforts to push a bit of acid paper off its belly, yet it cannot consciously feel it. We too readily argue an animal's feelings from our own.

But apart from all this, if we are willing to hear what the Bible has to say on the matter instead of spinning theories of our own, the difficulty is largely solved. The Bible teaches consistently, with that strange unity of conception running throughout the whole book which is so characteristic of it, that God is not the only power at work; there is an anti-God force of sin and evil, which is given personality as the Devil. That by sin came death—by human sin, human death (Rom. v. 12). We see the conflicting forces at work in the prologue to the book of Job. The Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the Devil. The whole world lieth in the evil one. To him is attributed the power of death.²

How the evil force came into existence we simply do not know. Whether it was originally good, whether it was somehow necessarily bound up with the constitution of things, or whether there have always been two great opposing forces, we can only speculate, not very profitably. But here it is; the world as we see it is like an artist's magnificent picture, with

¹ See the whole of the two striking cantos, lv. and lvi. of "In Memoriam." They are too long to quote.

² 1 John, iii. 8; 1 John v. 19; Heb. ii. 14. See also 2 Cor. xii. 7 and 1 Thess. ii. 18.

a great daub of black smeared across it by an enemy. Or to change the figure, it is like a chess-board on which White is playing Black; every move is the resultant of the two opposing forces. And we know also that White is stronger, and will eventually sweep the board, and leave not a black piece on it. We see not yet all things put under Him, but they will be (Heb. ii. 8). Why White does not do it now, we do not know. Till that day the creation must groan and travail in pain together, as it is doing, waiting for the revealing of the sons of God. Even in the animal world, the day of the carnivore and the snake will end; the wolf and the lamb will dwell together, and the sucking child will play on the hole of the asp. Then at last the song will be sung, "Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth; let us be glad."¹

And even now, in the world as we see it, pain is not an un-mixed evil. Without it, many of the virtues could not exist—the virtues of patient endurance, tolerance, courage, altruism. In fact, almost every virtue dips some of its roots into the rocky soil of sorrow. What is the meaning of "being made perfect through suffering"? Pain is in some intimate way connected with all true education, a fact which modern educationists of the Montessori type are apt to forget.

BOOKS.

Let it be explained that these chapters are intended to be but finger-posts to a line of study; the books mentioned at the end of each chapter are not references to the authorities quoted, and, emphatically, they are not the rind from which we have sucked the juice, as references so often are. These books are recommended as the next thing to read in following out any particular line. When the reader has finished them, we do not think he will have much difficulty in getting on further, if he is willing to take the trouble.²

A. R. WALLACE. *The World of Life*. (Chapman and Hall.) Here the world-famous scientist, co-founder with Charles Darwin of the Evolution theory, embodies many of his observations on Nature, and in the concluding chapters, on which we have largely drawn, shows the necessity for a guiding Intelligence in the world of life.

BISHOP—*Evolution Criticized*. (Sunday School Union.) The writer would probably not claim to be a scientific authority, but brings together the results of a wide and discreet reading. The facts, and acknowledgments of the difficulties of the theory by front-rank biologists, here collected together are well worthy of notice, though the reader may be left somewhat muddled!

¹ Rom. viii. 19–22; Isa. xi. 8; Rev. xix. 6, 7.

² Needless to say we do not endorse every opinion of every writer quoted.

TURTON—*The Truth of Christianity* (Jarrold).

Religio Critici (S.P.C.K.). These are good general apologetics, the first by an Army officer, the latter written anonymously by one who describes himself as having come out from doubt into light by a consideration of the lines followed in his book. Neither of these *specially* deals with the subject of this chapter.

CHAPTER II

The Hand of God in History

LET us suppose that whether we can see Him in Nature or no, there is perchance a God Who cares for human creatures and wishes to reveal Himself as fully as possible to them, and win their obedience and love. Then let us cast our attention back to some remote period in history, when any religion that men had may have been animistic, or idolatrous, or a reverence for the semi-mythical departed heroes of the race—when the discriminating worship of one supreme God was unknown or forgotten, and the world religiously was no better off than the unevangelized South Sea islander or Central African native of to-day, though it may have been more intelligent. How should such a God get into touch with such a world?

He might of course come down in some stupendous theophany, something brighter than the lightning and louder than the thunder, and give His message. Probably they would be too bewildered to understand it. In a generation or two the story would have faded into a confused legend. Or He might take a human form, as Greek mythology supposed of Aphrodite, Ares, Athene and the rest, and mingle with men. But why should they notice or believe Him? And in a few generations, as all history shows, they would slide back from monotheism into all shades of polytheism, pantheism, or atheism. There seems to be a persistent bias that way in the human mind. A new incarnation would be needed every generation. Is it possible to think out another method, slower it may be, more sparing in theophanies and divine incarnations, and more lasting in its effects? Let us remember that God has so much to reveal, man's interest in and capacity for unseen spiritualities are so slender, and there is such an anti-God bias to be contended against, that the problem will be very, very difficult.

A good many years ago a little scrap of autobiography was published anonymously by one who was a sceptic, but whose mind moved along the lines we have just been following. It occurred to him—would not the most promising method be to await the advent of some one individual with an unusually strong aptitude for spiritual things, to isolate him so that he should less readily be dragged back to the common level, and to educate him in an intense belief in the presence, power and characteristics of God? How could this be accomplished? By dreams, it may be. By brief appearances of a divine messenger in a human form. By special, supernatural or at any rate very remarkable tokens of favour. By swift judgment visited on the enemies of the divine revelation. If all this were spread over a long life, there would be a probability that this individual would transmit a strong and impressive tradition of God to his descendants. Of course, it would be quite impossible to accomplish this education without some signs of the supernatural—miracles, in other words.

Then the process would have to be repeated with a tribe or nation. They, too, must be isolated, and a very strong line of national demarcation drawn, just as in obtaining new breeds of flowers or domestic animals great care must be taken to avoid cross-breeding and relapse to the normal. There would have to be miracles again, special marks of favour, and judgment falling surely and swiftly on deviations from the right path, whether within or without the selected nation. There would need to be some leader more than ordinarily in touch with the divine influence. The process would have to be continued over many generations, until at last the tradition of monotheism, was firmly rooted in the minds of a part at least of the nation.

Then the time would be ripe for the next necessary stage in the process. By this time individuals would occasionally appear who would be far more than ordinarily responsive to the divine teaching, being prepared for it by many generations saturated with the main principles of religion. These individuals could be used to give messages to the nation; messages uttered by human lips, but expressing a very faithful interpretation of the divine teaching. Some of these might be written down. For the conviction of the multitude, these individuals themselves and their message would need to be fortified at any rate at first by special gifts, or it may be some special power of foretelling future events.

At long last, the nation and the world might be ripe for an

authentic incarnation, a true appearance of God veiled in human form, but how such a One would act, or what He would say, it would be futile to speculate.

When our anonymous writer had arrived at this point in his theorizing, it occurred to him that his *a priori* hypothesis as to how a God might have revealed Himself if He wished to do so coincided with what the Bible represents to have actually happened. Yet the books were written by so many different authors, and at times and places so remote from one another, that it is impossible that the narratives can have been trimmed to fit the hypothesis. A brief glance at the story of Abraham, perhaps the only God-fearing man on earth in his day, will show how he was isolated and educated. Israel in Egypt, the circumstances surrounding the Exodus, and the conquest of the promised land, fulfil all the requirements of the second stage. Then came the order of the prophets, inaugurated by a brief period of miracle in the days of Elijah and Elisha, to give an authority to what they and their successors had to teach. Then the nation was purged of idolatry by the captivity and restoration. Finally the God-man appeared, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. By this novel but impressive line of reasoning, the anonymous sceptic was led to faith.

But, it may be objected, all this is really unnecessary. Why not try a short cut? A few missionaries go to a Pacific island, and in a generation or two the island is practically Christian.

We submit that this is nothing to the point. The missionaries themselves are the product of centuries of Christian experience. They take a Bible which is the product of centuries of divine revelation through many human agents. There is a long human history intertwined with the message of God which is an essential ingredient of its power. And—supposing those missionaries and that Book are withdrawn, how many years will the island's Christianity survive? There is no historical evidence that it is possible to create a permanent Christian community in a heathen society, without some elements derived from those past dealings of God with mankind which took those thousands of years to mature.

And supposing we do not find the argument convincing, that the method we have sketched out is the best, what of that? We do not know all the data. It may have been the best method for God to use, for some reason that eludes our knowledge.

We must therefore regard an element of miracle in the Old Testament, not as a difficulty, but as a hall-mark of its

credibility as a record of God's dealings with the human race in its spiritual infancy. Without miracle, quick rewards and swift punishments, it would seemingly have been impossible to educate a heathen world. Much of the same principle enters into our dealings with children to-day. On these lines also a civilized country undertakes a mandate for the uplift of a race of savages—

“Your new-caught sullen races, half devil and half child.”

It has been customary to overawe them with a gunboat, an aeroplane, or a railway; to reward faithfulness, and come down heavily upon treachery; to begin with vigorous interference, and gradually to withdraw more and more into the background.

But, it may be objected, no amount of evidence will prove a miracle, because God's laws cannot be broken even by Himself. Therefore any narrative which contains the miraculous is suspect. This train of reasoning seems to suffer from lack of perspective. There may be deeper laws, acting regularly but only showing their effects at long intervals, that lie behind what we call the laws of nature, which are after all only what we have observed of the “customs of God.” Nothing seems more immutable than the law of day and night, yet occasionally, once in centuries it may be in England, it is broken by a total eclipse of the sun. Nothing seems more regular and calculable than the planetary system revolving round our sun, yet once or twice only in human history a comet has invaded it, also apparently obeying some mysterious law of gravitation, and perhaps never will be seen again. So the ordinary processes of sickness and health, life and death, and the behaviour of fire and water, may have been invaded in the past by the operation of a deeper-lying law that only acts at long intervals, and a snake-bitten Israelite may look upon a brazen serpent and recover, or the waters of Jordan be cut off from the Dead Sea for a day. It is noteworthy that miracle is not scattered haphazard throughout the Bible. In the days of Jacob, or of Samuel, or of the later prophets, or of Ezra, it does not appear. It coincides with the inauguration of the main stages sketched out above—in the days of Abraham, of the Exodus, the beginning of the era of the prophets, and at and for a while after the time of the manifestation of the Son of God. As far as mere *wonder* goes, is any miracle in the Bible more amazing than the development of a man from a 0.2 millimetre ovum?

In the previous chapter we quoted Drummond's significant remark that God is not only to be seen in gaps, that is to say, in miraculous interpositions. This is true not only in nature, but also in history. So far we have been considering the supra-normal in history; let us next inquire whether there is any evidence of God's supervision in the normal course of the rise and fall of nations and individuals.

At first sight the quest seems hopeless. History appears to be essentially unmoral. The sceptical proverb tells us that God is always on the side of the big battalions.

"Careless seems the great Avenger; history's pages but record
One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems and the Word;
Truth for ever on the scaffold, wrong for ever on the throne,
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own."¹

Great and good men have repeatedly gone to a martyr's grave, and the wicked have triumphed all their days.

Now, if there is any guiding principle by which God has governed the world, in spite of His standing within the shadow, we shall never discover it by guessing. We must allow the Bible to state what that principle may be, and then examine history to see if we can trace it in operation.

The Bible tells us that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men (Dan. iv. 32). It also tells us that the whole world lieth in the evil one (1 John v. 19). Exactly how these two statements are to be reconciled we are not informed. We learn, again, that rewards and punishments for individuals, in the main, are not in this life, but that there is a Judgment to come to right the wrongs and injustices of this world. But we do not hear of nations, as such, standing before that Judgment Throne;² the judgment of nations is in the present world. Much of the Old Testament is taken up with the setting forth of this principle, both in history and prophecy. Not only Israel, but also Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Moab, Edom and other nations are used to demonstrate it in operation.

And what is this principle? It is commonly represented that God stands behind history, and controls the issue of battles, so that Right may in the long run win—Right meaning a just cause according to international law. This theory,

¹ Russell Lowell, *The Present Crisis*.

² Even in Matthew xxv., it is the individuals who are judged, not nations as a whole.

though widely held, has little to support it either in scripture or in history. Again and again, in the Bible narrative, the theory breaks down. The Canaanites were right in international law to defend their homes against the invasion led by Joshua, but they were defeated and dispossessed. The Jews were right in international law when they tried to repel the Assyrians from Samaria and Nebuchadnezzar from Jerusalem, but their cities were taken, and themselves carried away captive. Secular history is full of records of the aggressor triumphing, and the good cause failing; Cortes conquered Mexico, and Pizarro overcame the Incas with abominable cruelty and treachery; the opium war against China ended in an undeserved British victory. Then what is the principle?

Quite consistently, it is represented throughout the Bible that a nation which seeks after God and obeys His laws in the main, is protected and helped both in peace and war, but that apostasy and disobedience lead to warning first, and then to judgment. When Israel was faithful, as in the days of Joshua, they triumphed. Throughout the books of Judges and Kings repentance and victory go hand in hand, and so do disobedience and defeat. The Lord Jesus Christ plainly warned the Jews of His day that because of their rejection of Him, "because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation," because like the wicked husbandmen they had abused the servants and slain the Son, their nation would lie under the judgment of God. He described beforehand the horrors of the siege of Jerusalem, and that they should be led away captive into all the nations, and that Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled (Luke xxi. 24).

How astonishingly prophecy and history have agreed, right up to our own time, in regard to the destiny of the Jewish race! What have been the outstanding features of their chequered career? One has been a long succession of sieges. Jerusalem was besieged by Sennacherib, by Nebuchadnezzar, by Antiochus Epiphanes, by Titus, and many a time since. It is pre-eminently the city of sieges. Samaria and Jotapata are famous in history for the same thing. Another feature has been that the Jews have been persecuted exiles. They were carried off by Shalmanezzer and Sargon, by Nebuchadnezzar, by Titus. They have spread everywhere and suffered everywhere. They were massacred in Egypt in classical antiquity, and exiled from Rome. They have been huddled into ghettos in every mediæval city; the Jews who are alive

to-day are relatively immune to tuberculosis, because all the Hebrew families which were susceptible to it died out long ago. English kings like John extracted a tooth a day from rich Jews to make them contribute money. Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* gives but too true a picture of how they were treated in the times of the crusades, and Shakespeare's Shylock shows how they were hated in his day. The Dreyfus affair in France, and the pogroms in Russia, Roumania and Poland prove that anti-Semitism is not dead even in our own generation. Yet there is scarcely a town on earth without a synagogue; they have maintained their nationality, their customs, their religion and even their facial appearance almost unchanged for three thousand years, whilst the other nations of far less antiquity have lost their individuality. But this is not the end of the story. For years they have been trickling back to their own land, and the Zionist movement has steadily gained strength; at the present time, Palestine is under a Jewish governor, and bids fair to become a Jewish state. The captivity is returning.

Now let us turn to prophecy, and read the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy. It does not matter for our present purpose whether we are orthodox and regard it as written by Moses, or adopt the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis that it first saw the light in the reign of Josiah. Here it is clearly stated that Israel's history will be governed by their faithfulness or unfaithfulness to God. There all the sieges (ver. 52), captivities (ver. 64) and cruelties they are to suffer are set before them, as well as in the prophecies by Christ Himself. How true it still is—"The Lord shall scatter thee among all peoples, from one end of the earth even unto the other" (Deut. xxviii. 64). In the year 606 B.C. or thereabout, Jeremiah wrote (xxx. 11): "I will make a full end of the nations whither I have scattered thee, but I will not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee with judgment, and will in no wise leave thee unpunished." Babylon, Nineveh and the Roman empire have gone, but the race they conquered remains. But Isaiah, Zechariah and most of the prophets foretell a future restoration of the Jews to their own land—a restoration in unbelief, followed by repentance. Frederick the Great of Prussia once turned suddenly on his chaplain, and asked him to prove the inspiration of the Bible in a word. The chaplain instantly replied, "The Jews, your Majesty."

The same principle, however, is operative amongst Gentile nations. The book of Jonah tells us of Nineveh condemned to destruction for its wickedness, repentant and forgiven.

There appears to be sufficient evidence afforded by the history of the past two thousand years to show that the same principle has always held good in the main. We cannot always know the exact moral and spiritual status of a nation before God, but we can sometimes hazard a probable guess. The overthrow of the morally rotten Roman and Byzantine empires, the turning back of the Moors in the days of Charlemagne, the victory of the Dutch when that nation won its deliverance from the tyranny of Spain, the fate of the Spanish Armada sent against Queen Elizabeth, the independence won by the first Protestant princes of Germany, the result of the American war of independence, the overthrow of Napoleon Bonaparte at a time when England had witnessed a great revival of faith under the preaching of the Wesleys and Whitefield, and France had but lately tried to abolish the Christian religion and enthroned a harlot as goddess of reason in Notre Dame (though Napoleon had to some extent brought her back from these follies)—in all this we may see the law operating pretty conclusively.

The extraordinary events of the twentieth century seem to bear it out. It is unquestionable that these years have witnessed a great departure from the visible institutions of the Christian faith in Great Britain, North America and on the continent of Europe, and though some maintain that a drawing away from the church, the sabbath and the Bible does not mean less faith in God, we fear that the outward signs are but too true an index of a turning away of mind and heart. These countries have all in past times known the truth, and to some considerable extent have embraced it. During the past forty years or thereabouts, the churches have more often declined than increased in membership, the old English Sunday is becoming more and more a day of pleasure and amusement, and the Bible, largely as a result of the destructive criticism of German and other theological professors, is read less and trusted less. Old-fashioned "conversions" are becoming uncommon, at any rate among the educated classes. Pleasure seeking and recreation have increased by leaps and bounds. Picture-houses took in 1915 about 180 million pounds; theatres and music-halls and outdoor sports and excursions have multiplied in a way that would have astounded the folk of forty years ago.

Let us hasten to add that we by no means despair of the prospects of the church of God, nor do we regard amusements and recreation as an unmixed evil. There have always been

periods of declension and periods of revival in the past, and if there has been stagnation in Europe, there has been a considerable advance in Asia and Africa. Human minds and bodies need recreation and change of occupation, especially in the case of industrial workers who are engaged in very monotonous tasks all day long, such as may be seen in most modern factories. Bodily exercise, says the Apostle, is profitable for a little, but godliness for all things (1 Tim. iv. 8, R.V.). Strenuous athletics protect lads and young men from sins of the flesh. Nevertheless the general indictment holds true, that there has been an apostasy from God. If so, God's law of history ought to be seen in operation, first in warnings, then in unmistakable judgment. We submit that recent events bear this out.

How does God speak—how used He to speak? By earthquake, by calamity, by war, by pestilence. He has done so. San Francisco and Messina were devastated by earthquake. In April, 1912, the great Atlantic liner *Titanic*, crowded with British and American notables, struck an iceberg in calm weather, and the supposedly unsinkable ship went down with 1,500 souls. It was as though civilization had boasted its triumph against the forces of Nature, and we had to learn that our great buildings on land, and masterpieces of engineering at sea, are but puny toys after all. And if science could not command safety, neither could money. Six millionaires perished; some of them had paid £870 for their berths. There is no doubt that this incident, and the sinking of the *Empress of Ireland* shortly afterwards, was really felt as a voice to our modern civilization. But there was little if any sign of a change of heart. Then came the war. If war ever had a lesson to teach any nation, this was on such a stupendous scale that it must have been the greatest lesson of all time, so far as war can serve as a teacher. We suggest that it is well worth consideration if there has not been a certain ratio between the degree in which each nation has suffered, and the degree in which it had departed from God. It is not individuals that have been judged, but nations.

This is not all the lesson. As during the South African War a national day of prayer when things looked at their blackest, after Spion Kop and Magersfontein, was followed by the victory of Paardeburg, so God's hand was seen in the recent conflict. On July 17, 1918, when the great German offensive had triumphed three times already and looked like triumphing again, the Premier arose in the House of Commons and

announced that August 4 would be set apart as a National Day of Intercession, and that the King, the Lords and the Commons would assemble at St. Margaret's Church to bow in the presence of God. It was a fuller recognition of Him than the previous Days of Prayer had seen. On July 18, the French counter-attack paralysed the enemy offensive. On August 8, General Ludendorff wrote in his memoirs, since published, "This is the black day of the German army." A force approximately equal to the defenders in numbers, composed of Canadians and Australians, with a French army, overwhelmed von Hutier south of the Somme, and from that day forward the issue of the war was never in doubt. Even Ludendorff despaired after August 8.

As if even the war had not taught the world its lesson—and indeed the signs of a change of heart have not been obvious—there followed the pestilence. Modern medical science is well able, in a civilized community, to control many of the scourges that vexed our forefathers—plague, cholera, typhus and the like—but nothing availed to check the three waves of the great influenza epidemic, and millions of healthy adults died. Scarcely a country on earth was exempt.

These are strange dealings, and need to be considered in a reverent spirit. Unbelief and passion blame God for allowing them. This is short sighted, as unbelief and passion usually are. In God's sight men's eternal souls are more than their bodies and lives. It is sound surgery to amputate a limb to save a life, and a spiritual revival may be worth the shortening—only the shortening, for we are all mortal—of many lives.¹

Again, we do not know the exact relationship of the anti-God force which we have seen exists in the universe, to such calamities as war and pestilence. Certainly the cruelty and hatred that such a strife engenders are not of God. It would appear from what Scripture teaches that evil is potent up to a certain point, but subject to God's veto; He may, if He sees fit, lift His restraining hand, to let it be seen how awful a thing uncontrolled sin can be. That text so beloved of the sceptic, "I make peace and create evil" (Isa. xlv. 7) does not of course refer to moral evil at all, but to God's permission of temporal judgment. It is best understood in the light of the first two chapters of Job, and such a verse as Amos iii. 6—"Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" But these are deep waters. Neither the Old Testament

¹ See 1 Cor. v. 5.

nor the New clearly explains the mystery. Enough is told us to make rebellion and blasphemy seem foolish in the light of our little information, but in spite of our ignorance, it does seem clear that History is not a mere clash of blind forces, but God does stand within the shadows keeping watch and acting as the final Arbiter, and that He has given us just a hint of His principles of action in the Bible.

And History draws on to an end. The end is to be the Kingdom of God on earth, ushered in by the visible return of the King.

BOOK.

The Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation. The argument in the earlier part of this chapter is derived from this famous old tract, written by a sceptic after his conversion.

CHAPTER III

The Credibility of the Pentateuch

LET it be clearly understood, from the outset of this chapter, that we do not regard even a general agreement with its conclusions as an essential part of Christian faith. No doubt there are many true Christian men and women who quite honestly have difficulty in accepting the first five books in the Bible as historical. Hesitations about Genesis ought never to bar the way to faith in Christ. But we believe that much is lost if the five books of Moses, and the book of Joshua, are to be relegated to the level of myth. The origin of the world, and of the human race, and of culture and religion, is intensely interesting, and in our opinion the difficulties of reconciling the teaching of the Bible with the undoubted facts of science and history are not so great as many suppose.

Why should we believe in the historicity of the Pentateuch? For three main reasons. Firstly, because it incessantly claims Divine inspiration, as do many other parts of the Bible.

Secondly, because the New Testament constantly affirms that the Mosaic history and the complicated directions contained in the book of Leviticus (and to some extent in the other books also) which look at first sight enormously and unnecessarily complex and hopelessly out of date, are pictures of teaching value, helping us moderns to understand Christian living, and the various aspects of Christ's life and death. It would be impossible to justify this statement without writing a book on it. It is a subject for years of study. That some highly fanciful interpretations have been put upon every little detail by some ultra-specialists, without due New Testament authority, bringing the whole subject into disrepute, does not interfere with the plain fact mentioned. Thus the passover is treated in the epistles as typifying Christ's death, passing through the waters of the Red Sea as baptism, the manna as man's spiritual nature being fed by Christ, the pillar of

cloud as Divine guidance, and so on. Every part of the tabernacle ritual has a meaning and a teaching.¹

Thirdly, because the Lord Jesus Christ appears to have accepted the historicity of the first six books in the Old Testament unreservedly. He refers to the marriage in Eden, to the Deluge, to the story of Abraham, to the burning bush, to the manna in the wilderness, and to the brazen serpent, and repels the tempter with three quotations from Deuteronomy. Many more examples could, of course, be cited.

An attempt has been made to weaken the force of this argument by the Kenosis theory, based on Philippians ii. 7, that when He assumed human form He laid aside His Divine knowledge, and became dependent on information derived from human teachers not always reliable. The difficulty about this theory is that it does not seem to be consistent with the evidences of His full Deity, which are discussed in the next chapter. An unprejudiced reading of the gospels will show that He displayed a more than human knowledge of things temporal and things spiritual, and there is no case in which His information was inaccurate (*see* p. 81).

Even after the resurrection, there was no change in His attitude towards the Sacred Writings. "Behoved it not," that is to say, "was it not *essential*, that the Christ should suffer?" He exclaims on the way to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 26). Then He explained to the two disciples all the Scriptures referring to Himself. Later, coming to the apostles, He said, "All things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning Me." Dare we think that His knowledge was limited even after He rose from the dead?

We quite realize that the Kenosis theory has come as a great relief to some who feel that the Old Testament is incredible, and yet cling to faith in Jesus Christ. But perhaps they may have overlooked evidence that the Pentateuch does after all bear the marks of a Divine hand, that miracle is not impossible but a probable means of revelation, that literary critics are apt to overrate their powers and accept too easily their own and other critics' conclusions, and that archæology is more favourable to the Bible than to the critical hypothesis.

The difficulties of the Pentateuch may be ranged under three heads, scientific, literary and historical. It will be convenient to take these separately.

¹ For a simple introduction to this study, *see* notes in a Schofield Bible.

THE SCIENTIFIC DIFFICULTIES OF THE PENTATEUCH

The objections that have been taken to the early chapters of Genesis by modern science are that it appears to teach that the world and all living things were suddenly created out of nothing, in six days, about six thousand years ago ; whereas scientific textbooks teach that the human race is scores of thousands of years old and was evolved from animals. They also teach that the animals themselves, and the world, are of almost incredible antiquity. Exception is taken, too, to the story of the Deluge. Some biologists would go farther, and deny that there is any room in the realm of nature for a Divine Creator.

Obviously it will be necessary at the outset to draw a careful distinction between the *facts*, on the one hand, and the deductions which have been drawn from them, whether by the theologians from Genesis, or by scientists from geology and biology.

The relevant facts of geology are briefly these. The rocks that make up the earth's crust, so far as we can examine them in cliff, quarry, boring, or along the seashore, are partly of volcanic origin and in that case contain no remains of animals or plants (except occasionally in ashy deposits), but principally consist of layer upon layer, many thousands of yards deep, of compressed sand, pebble-beds, mud deposits and coral-reefs from ancient seashores. These often enclose fossil-relics of the life of long ago. Often these fossils are so like modern types that it is difficult to believe that they are not recent. Let anyone, for instance, examine the coal-measure ferns in any town museum, or the leaves in the clay-beds of the cliffs at Bournemouth, or the sea-shells in the mud at Barton-on-sea in Hampshire (both Eocene), or the shark's teeth in any museum from the chalk ; yet in spite of their recent appearance all these were long ago extinct, and were buried at an immense depth below the surface, until they were exposed to view by forcible elevation from below, or by the removal of the overlying masses of deposit by the agency of water or of ice. As is well known, complete skeletons of extinct animals are sometimes found, as well as footmarks on ancient mud deposits, and ripple-marks on the sand from the waves of ancient seas. When we see how long these deposits take to form on a modern beach, making all allowance for variations in rate, it affords some idea of the immensity of time that has been required for all these rocks to be laid down, and therefore

of the extreme antiquity of the older fossils, especially when we remember that there have been long periods of erosion as well as of deposit. Geologists talk glibly of millions of years, and with reason. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion, unless we resort to the theory current a hundred years ago that the fossils were put in the rocks by the Devil to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect!

All over the world the included fossils show a regular succession of forms of life, and when one form has disappeared, it never returns in younger rocks. This enables us to co-relate the deposits in different parts of the country and even in distant lands, and to tabulate a more or less constant series of rocks characterized by certain special fossils. In many formations, there may be distinctive zone-fossils for every layer a few inches thick, e.g. the succession of Ammonites in the Jurassic, holding good all over a continent. Considering now only the great main systems, they are classified as follows :

Quaternary	{ Recent and Historical. Pleistocene, i.e. the great Ice Age.
Cainozoic or Tertiary	{ Pliocene } consisting of soft recent-looking sand { Miocene } and mud deposits (at any rate { Oligocene } in England), with recent-looking { Eocene } but often extinct fossils.
Mesozoic or Secondary	{ Cretaceous, including the Chalk. Jurassic, including the Lias and Oolites, extending from the Dorset coast across England to Yorkshire. Rhætic. Triassic, i.e. new red Sandstone, occupying level ground in the Midlands.
Palæozoic or Primary	{ Permian. Carboniferous, including the Mountain Limestone of Derbyshire and the Bristol district, and the Coal-measures. Devonian and Old red Sandstone. Silurian Ordovician } including the oldest rocks in Cambrian } Wales, often slatey.
Pre-Cambrian.	

What, in terms of years, all this represents is utterly uncertain. It is clear that the Eocene is immensely older than the Ice Age, but that the Palæozoic formations are so ancient

that the whole of Cainozoic time is small in comparison.¹

Now, so far, there is no great difficulty. The first verse in Genesis tells us that "in the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth." This statement allows unlimited time. Genesis and geology agree that at first the surface of the world was covered with water, and that land appeared later. If, however, the animals and plants found fossil in the rocks are the same as those referred to in Genesis as created on the third, fifth and sixth "days," these cannot well be days of twenty-four hours each, and the time required must have begun much more than six thousand years ago. Let us look farther and inquire at what stages in geological history the various forms can first be found in the rocks. A proviso is necessary; the rocks are mainly shore deposits, and therefore shellfish are likely to be preserved, but land-animals and plants might have been in existence long before the period at which they are first found fossil. Also, the geological record is full of enormous gaps, and only a very small part of the rocks on the earth's surface has been properly explored, so that it ill becomes a geologist to speak with an air of finality.

TABLE OF FIRST APPEARANCES IN FOSSIL FORM

Gen. i. 26, 27	{	Pleistocene—most modern mammals; man.
		Pliocene—some modern mammals; possibly, according to some authorities, man.
Gen. i. 24, 25	{	Eocene—snakes.
		Jurassic—birds (Archæopteryx); sea-monsters as Ichthyosaurus, Plesiosaurus.
		Rhætic—mammals (Microlestes) allied to the Australian duck-bill platypus.
		Carboniferous—giant amphibians (Labyrinthodonts) allied to the modern newt.
Gen. i. 20–22	{	Silurian—land-plants (Neuropteris—a species of fern found in France). Shark-like fish. An insect (Palæoblattina).
		Ordovician—seaweeds, possibly land-plants. An insect (Protocimex). Fish-like vertebrates (Ostracoderms).
		Cambrian—seaweeds (probably): shellfish; crustaceans (Trilobites).
		Pre-Cambrian—no fossils.

¹ Any who wish to commence the study of geology, but have no teacher, would do well to start with Woodward's *Geological Atlas* (Stanford & Co.).

This table is in accord with the four or five latest textbooks of geology, British, American and German, in 1921, but may, of course, be altered any year by fresh discoveries.

Turning now to the Genesis record, we find no notice taken of seaweeds, shellfish, or crustaceans; land-plants appear on the third day, fish and winged creatures on the fifth, mammals and snakes on the sixth, and man last. The word translated "whale" in the record of the fifth day means any sea-monster, and would fitly describe the great Labyrinthodonts which have left their footmarks on the muddy shores of the seas they used to live in, or the sea-reptiles (*Ichthyosaurus*, etc.) of a later period.

Now, wherein does this differ from the geological record? Only in that it gives land-plants appearing before fish, whereas in the rocks they probably appear at about the same time. But any geologist would admit that in all probability plants really came first. The Ordovician and Silurian are shore deposits; fish would readily be preserved, but the chances of land-plants becoming fossil would be very remote, even if the land was covered with vegetation. As a matter of fact, an insect does occur, which proves the prior existence of plant life. There is no reasonable doubt that the land supported some kind of vegetable life in Cambrian times, and perhaps in Pre-Cambrian. Winged "fowl," appearing on the fifth day, certainly includes insects, as is proved by the use of the same Hebrew word, "oph," in Leviticus xi. 20-23 for locusts. Nor is it any great difficulty that light and darkness, and plant life, are spoken of before the sun and moon can be seen from the earth. Any student of astronomy knows that on a young planet there will be a stage when it is covered with water and cloud, and that there will be a distinction between light and darkness before the clouds part sufficiently to make the sun and moon visible. If the Nebular hypothesis is to be accepted, there would be a period when the earth would have been formed, but the glowing mass in the centre of the solar system might not yet have consolidated into the sun. It is quite probable that plant life might have begun in this stage. We find here and here alone in ancient literature an extraordinarily exact and credible account of the origin of the world, far too accurate to be arrived at by guesswork. It does not state that every species was separately created.¹ Four acts of creation of living things are related (vv. 12, 21, 24, 27). As for the "days," two views are possible. Either

¹ The exact meaning of the word (*bara*) translated "create" cannot be decided by the opinion of scholars, but by its usage in scripture. See, for instance, Psalm cii. 18.

they represent periods of time of indeterminate length—a thousand years may be as one day (2 Peter iii. 8), and in Genesis ii. 4, 5 all creation is crowded into one day—or there may be a great catastrophe between Genesis i. 1 and 2, wherein all the geological world and its life perished, and a fresh start was made. Many orthodox theologians take the latter view. We do not think, however, that many are likely to hold it who have given careful consideration to the phenomena presented by, shall we say, the present and past distribution of species of animals.¹ It seems to us preferable to regard the “days” as representative terms of God’s time—periods of activity with periods of rest.² The seventh day of rest still continues, in that apparently no new creation of totally distinct classes of animals or plants has taken place during human history. God’s days could be measured before the sun was created, human days could not. “Are Thy days as the days of man?”³ In John v. 28, 29 an hour is spoken of when there shall be a resurrection of life and a resurrection of judgment; in Rev. xx. we find that a period of a thousand years is included in this hour. In Psalm xc. (“a prayer of Moses”) we are told, “A thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past.” As a matter of fact, the use of the phrase “evening and morning” in Genesis instead of the natural sequence of evening following morning seems to show that the words are used in a figurative sense—God continuing His work of bringing light and order out of chaos as in verse 3. Nor does the allegation that the later Jews counted their days from the evening (a usage perhaps based on this passage) discount this, for the Old Testament almost invariably speaks of “day and night,” and we read of “all that day, and all that night, and all the next day” (Num. xi. 32) in a perfectly natural way. We are not aware of any evidence that the Biblical writers regarded the day as starting in the evening.

We are led thus to our next difficulty. Modern scientific opinion, derived from archæology and geology, would make the beginnings of the human race very ancient—certainly in Pleistocene, possibly in Pliocene times. In the margins of some of our Bibles we read, over the creation of man, the date 4004 B.C. We are indebted for this figure to the researches of an Irish archbishop, Ussher, who died in 1656, but he may have been mistaken in his complicated calculations—we shall return to this presently.

¹ See p. 51.

² This is no new theory imported to avoid modern scientific difficulties. It is as old as Origen and Augustine.

³ Job x. 5.

The evidence from archæology cannot, in the nature of things, be regarded as furnishing mathematical proof of dates, but sober and careful students have produced real evidence that the civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia and Central Asia are rather older than Ussher's date will allow. Napoleon cried to his soldiers in Egypt at the battle of the Pyramids, "Forty centuries look down upon you," but in all probability he could have said fifty. A list of the Egyptian dynasties has been preserved by Manetho, a priest of the third century before Christ, which was copied by Josephus and others. At one time it was thought to be all guesswork, until excavations in Egypt brought to light the monuments even of some of the earliest kings he mentioned. The Great Pyramid was built by Khufu of the fourth dynasty. By astronomical calculations, depending on the fact that the Egyptians did not observe leap year and therefore had to shift the months once in 1,460 years, Flinders Petrie has been able to fix the commencement of the first dynasty at 4777 B.C., and the fourth at 3998. A papyrus discovered in Thebes (Prisse Papyrus) is preserved in Paris, written in the third dynasty, probably 4450 B.C. It is an excellent treatise on morals, and contains a reference to the one overruling God. It is right to add, however, that the Berlin school of Egyptology reduces all these dates by 1,460 years. Different copies of Manetho's list vary the total length of reigns from 4,480 to 5,524 years,

The Mesopotamia civilization is probably older. There was a king of Agade (Accad) named Sargon, to the north of Babylon, whose inscription states that he reigned for forty-five years. The date is supposed to be about 3800 B.C., because an inscribed cylinder of Nabonidus, the father of the Belshazzar mentioned in the book of Daniel, tells us that in some excavations a stone was found deposited by Sargon's son "which for 3,200 years none of the kings that had lived before him had seen." The British Museum Guide states that the scribes of Nabonidus probably exaggerated the interval, but we are yet without means of fixing a definite date for the Accadian kings.

The geologists ask for much more than this. Human skeletons and bones have frequently been found under circumstances that bespeak an enormous antiquity, and though a few of them may be interments, and a few frauds, and some have had an exaggerated estimate of their age placed upon them by enthusiastic discoverers, yet far too much remains to be explained away. Since writing the above sentence, one of us has been in a cave and seen a human bone dug up from the floor in a layer full of the remains of Ice Age animals now

extinct in England (elk, lemming, etc.). The Galley Hill and Ipswich skeletons, found in 1888 and 1911 respectively, are of modern type but lying in Pleistocene deposits. There are many discoveries of human bones found embedded beneath stalagmite in caves, which if not Glacial are thousands of years old, as at Cheddar, or associated with the bones of extinct animals, as in the La Chapelle aux Saintes cave in France, where in addition to human bones those of the reindeer and rhinoceros were found. All the above show skulls of a modern European type, but of late years the problem has been complicated by the discovery of ancient skulls which are somewhat ape-like in character, as the Piltdown man from Sussex, the Neanderthal type, with great ridged eyebrows and a crouching gait but good brain capacity (from Neanderthal, Spy,¹ etc.), and the Heidelberg skull, with a very broad ramus to the jaw and no chin. It is undecided whether *Pithecanthropus erectus*, found in Java, is human or a true missing link between man and apes. It is of Pleistocene age (originally thought to be Tertiary). Casts of all these skulls may be seen in most modern museums.

We shall not say much about Palæolithic stone instruments, because although they are found much more frequently than skeletons, and many of them are undoubtedly the work of human hands, yet with regard to others there is considerable doubt. It has been shown by Breuil and others that at least some of the flint flakes that were supposed to prove Pliocene man can be imitated by the pressure of earth movements. More convincing are the carved bones, or prehistoric sketches of animals so often found in French and Spanish caves, usually associated with Palæolithic implements. Some of these are undoubtedly Pleistocene. At Font de Gaume, Dordogne, the animals represented are the bison, horse, reindeer, mammoth, bear, wolf and rhinoceros, one species of which used to be an Arctic animal. Such a considerable body of evidence is now available that it is possible to divide the Palæolithic Age into seven periods characterized by the shape of the flint instruments in fashion; some phases, the earlier, are associated with the bones of the elephant, rhinoceros and hippopotamus, probably indicative of a warm climate (in France and England), and a later stage (Magdalenian) shows an Arctic fauna, including the mammoth, reindeer, Arctic fox and grizzly bear.

And how long ago was this great Ice-Age? It used to be stated that it was eighty thousand years ago (Croll), and that

¹ And very recently in Rhodesia.

the Niagara gorge, which is post-glacial, was at least 35,000 years old. Later investigations curtail these estimates a good deal, and probably the gorge is only 7,000 years old. De Geer's investigations in Scandinavia show good evidence, from the deposits left by the retreating glaciers year by year, that the Ice Age may have ended 9,000 years ago. The very sober and conservative estimates of G. F. Wright place the beginnings of the human race about ten to fifteen thousand years ago. Keith, Sollas and others would demand hundreds of thousands of years. But we are not much impressed by estimates drawn from the thickness of stalagmite or river-gravel that may overlie human remains, because these estimates can only be based on the rate of deposit at the present day, whereas in the past the rate was probably much greater. In the post-glacial period rivers were enormous, and gravels would accumulate a hundred times as fast as they do now. In some petrifying wells, calcareous deposits grow at an extraordinary rate, and this may have happened in some caves in the past.

It is a common belief amongst scientific men that there has been a gradual evolution of man's body and mind ever since he first appeared on the earth, whereas the Bible teaches that from the first he was "very good," until the Fall. This belief depends not on observed facts (if we exclude the exceedingly dubious evidence of the Piltdown and Neanderthal types, the age of which is so uncertain, and *Pithecanthropus*), but on a theory, as some eminent scientists have pointed out. If Darwinism is true and applies to man, it must be so, but where is the evidence? One must distinguish, of course, between *culture*, which has advanced because each generation can build its quota on to the progress of the past, and *mental power*. Some of the earliest skulls show as good a brain capacity as the modern European. Probably there has never been a finer race than the Cro-Magnon (neolithic) of France. An eminent modern anthropologist writes: "Thus, as we trace *Homo sapiens* backwards, we do not find him gradually merging into a different animal. On the contrary we find some glorified Bushmen, and another race which is the finest the world has ever seen. The Darwinians may or may not be right in thinking that man, as we know him, arose by imperceptibly slow progress from some sub-human creature; the indirect proofs of this theory may or may not be forcible, but of direct palæontological evidence of such an origin there is none."¹ The early cultures—the Accadian in Mesopotamia, the pyramid

¹ Thacker: *Science Progress*, Oct. 1915, p. 364.

builders in Egypt, the Incas in Peru, and in fact almost every really ancient civilization we know of, bear testimony to a mental capacity not one whit inferior to that of the average man of to-day. Who were the prehistoric geniuses who counted the days of the year, and invented soap, glass, iron-smelting, bronze and cheese?

We return, therefore, to our problem—does the Bible really teach that man is not yet 6,000 years old? Ussher's calculations are by no means universally accepted; it would be interesting to know how many men now living have verified them. He was probably influenced by a desire to arrive at a round figure—4,000 years before Christ's birth, which he put in 4 B.C. Other Bible students give an earlier date (Hales, etc.). But if the years mentioned in the genealogies of Genesis v. and xi. are added up, there is no room for even the 10,000 years' period asked for by G. F. Wright, and certainly not for the extreme demands of Sir A. Keith and others.

Four ways, at least, have been suggested to meet the difficulty:—(1) CATASTROPHE THEORY. It is supposed by many orthodox theologians that there is a great catastrophe between the first and second verses of Genesis, and that the plants and animals which had survived the Ice Age, and perhaps Palæolithic man also, perished in the general overthrow; following on this the world was repopled by a fresh creation. Speaking for ourselves, we do not find this theory the best available. The scriptural evidence on which it rests seems far too shadowy¹—so much so that it appears to be quite a modern idea. The word translated "replenish" in Genesis i. 28 is simply *male*, "to fill," and in the Hebrew has no sense of refilling. The theory creates scientific difficulties greater than those it is intended to solve, especially with regard to the fauna and flora of islands—to quote one instance out of many, the persistence of marsupials and monotremes in Australia, allied to those found all over the world in Rhætic and later Mesozoic times. Again it seems very improbable that those Miocene, Pliocene and Pleistocene animals and plants which are identical with modern species should have been annihilated, and then recreated. Practically all our modern mammals, reptiles and amphibia were represented by identical or allied fossil forms during, and often long prior to, the great Ice Age, and so were many plants. Did the sun, too, perish, and was it made again on the fourth day? A

¹ This evidence is based on an interpretation of Isaiah xlv. 18.

school of geologists 70 years ago believed in catastrophes of this sort, but their views have long since been given up.

(2) MYTH THEORY. Very many Christians believe that the early chapters of Genesis represent not history but a folklore story of Babylonian origin. Revelation is not admitted. Whilst not denying that one might honestly accept this view and yet be a sincere Christian, we feel that it is scarcely consistent with the reverent use made of these chapters by the Divine Son of God, and also that the first chapter of Genesis is so extraordinarily accurate, as we have seen, that we should hesitate long before giving up any part of the narrative.

(3) THE THEORY OF PRE-ADAMITE MAN. Whilst not devoid of difficulty this theory is certainly defensible. What is a "man?" According to the geological test, man is an animal with bones of a particular form, and a skull of a certain cranial capacity to accommodate the brain; or alternatively, a creature intelligent enough to make flint or metal tools. In the Bible, man is a creature with an eternal spirit, God-like (Gen. i. 26, 27; ii. 7). Are we quite sure that the geologist's flint-maker of Palæolithic times was a man in the Genesis sense? Nowadays the question is complicated by recent discoveries, and some scientists of repute describe to-day not only *Homo sapiens* but also *Homo neanderthalensis*, *H. heidelbergensis*, *Eoanthropus dawsoni*, and *Pithecanthropus erectus*. The remains on which the last three of these are based are ridiculously inadequate (one damaged and fragmentary specimen of each), and various historic personages would do very well for specimens of the Neanderthal type, e.g. a certain Bishop Mansui of Toul. But apart from these objections, were these ancient forms "man" in the Bible sense of the word? Who shall say?

If there were pre-Adamite creatures with the body and mind of a man, but not the spirit and the capacity for God and eternity, certain obscure references in Genesis become clearer. The old problem as to where Cain got his wife might be solved, also the strange reference to the sons of God¹ marrying the daughters of men (Gen. vi. 2). It is said that Cain feared that every one that found him would kill him, when the narrative only mentions one other man (Adam) living on earth at the time. It speaks of the solitary wanderer building a "city," as soon as a son was born to him, which seems to imply a population to dwell in it.

(4) THE PALÆOLITHIC ADAM THEORY. There is a great deal of what seems to be conclusive evidence that the real

¹ In Luke iii. 38 Adam is called "son of God."

trouble is that Ussher and the rest have not appreciated properly the principles on which ancient Hebrew genealogies were compiled. A learned and orthodox Bible scholar, Prof. W. H. Green, of Princeton,¹ argues that it is the custom to leave out many of the less important names; this is well seen in the St. Matthew genealogy of our Lord, where Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah are omitted. In 1 Chronicles xxvi. 24 David gave an appointment to one Shebuel, the son of Gershon, the son of Moses; of course Moses' grandson could not have been alive in David's time. The genealogy of Ezra is abridged in his book (cf. 1 Chron. vi. 3-14, with Ezra vii. 1-5). There appear to be omissions in the genealogy of Moses and Aaron; and if there are no abridgments in Numbers iii. 19, 27, 28, the grandfather of Moses had in his lifetime 8,600 male descendants (Num. iv. 36). If there are no omissions in Genesis xi., Noah and Abraham were contemporary for fifty-eight years, and Shem nearly outlived Abraham. Probably every Bible student has noticed other difficulties of this sort, and is convinced that there is something wrong, not with the genealogies—the men who wrote them, on any theory, were not fools—but with an interpretation of them which gives such incredible results. It seems justifiable to conclude, therefore, that the fifth and eleventh chapters of Genesis are to be interpreted as we are obliged to interpret other Biblical genealogies, and that the tables omit many names and consequently many centuries, and that the Garden of Eden story may therefore be thousands of years older than Ussher's estimate. It will be noticed that the Bible never uses the figures in these tables to compile a total number of years since Adam; or gives any other encouragement to measure the antiquity of man. Yet elsewhere Moses is particularly given to adding up his totals (*see* Gen. xlv. 27; Num. i. 46; iii. 39; xxvi. 51; xxxi. 32-52). Further, it seems clear that the figures have suffered in transmission by copyists. Thus Lamech lived 182 years (Hebrew text), 188 (Septuagint), 53 (Samaritan) and Adam lived 130 years (Hebrew), 230 (Sept.), 130 (Samar.) before their sons were born. Though most scholars believe the Hebrew text is the best in general, no one thinks it is perfect in its present form.

The greatest difficulty in the earlier chapters of Genesis, as it seems to us, is to be found in the origin of woman. We do not pretend to be able to say anything in explanation of this;

¹ Quoted in Wright, *see* end of chapter.

except to remark that even those who reject the Genesis account still have great problems to face. We are forced to invoke Divine intervention to account for the origin of the first man—his mind and spirit, if not his body. We may believe in a new creation, or that—

“The Lord let the house of a brute to the soul of a man,”¹

but there must be a second intervention to provide the first woman, so why not frankly accept the Biblical story? The Hebrew word translated “rib” does not occur anywhere else, so no one can be certain what it meant, except as ancient tradition guides us. The only alternative appears to be a blind adherence to the Darwinian theory in the face of immense difficulties; we must believe in the evolution of man in spite of the unbridgable gap between the mind of a man and that of a brute; we must deny that there were any beginnings of a spirit in man that may commune with God and live for ever; we must maintain that of course we are better, mentally or physically, than our ancestors of Cro-Magnon, Egypt, Accad, and the Palæolithic caves, in spite of all evidence to the contrary.

It remains to make a few remarks about the Deluge. The teaching of current rationalism, widely accepted also in Christian circles, is that such a catastrophe is scientifically incredible, and that the story itself is nothing but a Babylonian legend. Certain it is that both the people of Babylon, who were Semites, and their non-Semitic predecessors the Sumerians, have left tablets preserving stories of the Creation, the Deluge and long-lived patriarchs, so like the opening chapters of Genesis that they must go back to a common source. One such record, recently discovered at Nippur, of Sumerian origin, probably dates from 2000 B.C., and so is older than Abraham. Four gods take part in the creation; man is created first, then the animals (why did not Moses follow this seeming more honourable version, if he had no help from inspiration?). When the flood comes, Ziusudu, a pious/priest-king, builds a great ship and is preserved alive. The flood only lasts seven days. In the much later Gilgamesh epic, the narrative more closely resembles the Genesis account; the dimensions of the ark are given, all kinds of animals are taken in, and birds are sent out to test the abatement of the waters.

¹ Tennyson, “By an Evolutionist.”

The hero of this version is called Ut-napishtim. But all this does not prove that the Bible account was copied from the Sumerian. It is equally probable that it embodies the original and monotheistic version of a true story. We shall return later to the question as to whether monotheism is original or not. Nor does the fact that the Deluge was widely believed in militate against the truth of the tradition, but rather the other way.

If it was reasonable to interpret the Bible as teaching that the whole world as we now know it, including South America, Antarctica and the like, was submerged at one time, and that every one of our 790,000 species of animals was represented in the ark, which was only 150 yards long, the difficulties would indeed be formidable. This is just the sort of artificial difficulty that some types of mind love to raise against the Bible. It is an outrage on the use of words to talk like this; words in the Bible as in any other old book are used in the sense that they bore at the time of writing, and not in the sense that they have come to bear to-day. It was the then known world that went under the deluge, and the then known animals that were preserved alive. We do not believe that Abraham went out of the world, because the same Hebrew word is used in Genesis xii. 1 as is translated "earth" in the narrative of the flood. When Luke says all the world was to be taxed, he obviously did not mean South America.

There is plenty of proof that the early home of the human race, northern Persia, Armenia and the neighbouring countries, has been under water at a comparatively recent date, geologically speaking—certainly since the Ice Age. At Trebizond, on the Black Sea, there is a raised beach 750 feet up the mountain. The Caspian, the Sea of Aral and Lake Balkash have no outlet, but their waters are still comparatively fresh. Therefore they must be of recent origin. Also, there is a seal still living in Lake Baikal and the Caspian, and found fossil around the Sea of Aral, which is now found no nearer than the Arctic Ocean, so that these waters must have been connected.¹ Even if the submersion which left these traces is not the same as the Noachian deluge (which perhaps did not last long enough to account for all this), it suffices to show that the story is far from incredible. Needless to say, there is no good reason to think that the mountain *now* called Ararat is the one on which the ark rested. It is too high and precipitous to fit the narrative.

¹ Wright, *Quarterly Journal Geological Society*, 1901, p. 244.

THE DOCUMENTARY THEORY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

Very briefly, the theory which is held by many critical scholars, and currently taught in theological colleges and even in the ordinary school curriculum at the present time, is that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses, nor for centuries after, but by many hands and at very various dates. The oldest stratum, emanating from the days of Solomon or a little later, say 850 B.C., is said to consist of two closely parallel narratives called J and E, distinguished principally by their use of JHWH or Elohim respectively for the Divine name. These contribute the bulk of the narrative parts of Genesis, Exodus and Numbers. Next comes D, comprising nearly the whole of Deuteronomy, written in the reign of Josiah, say 621 B.C., found in the temple by Hilkiah (if not written by him), and palmed off on the king and people as an authentic work of Moses. Finally comes P, the priestly code, including Leviticus, the liturgical parts of Exodus and Numbers, and considerable fragments of each of the historical parts of the books, including the first chapter of Genesis. In reality, the theory is much more complicated, with P¹, P², H, etc. P is said to date from the time of Ezra; probably he had a hand in writing it. Given a document so late, and by so many hands of unknown authors, it is easy to deny the historical worth of the books, and it is roundly declared that the tabernacle in the wilderness never had any existence. No new or outside evidence is advanced to justify these sweeping conclusions; they are derived from a study of the Old Testament itself; in fact, as we shall see, the recent discoveries of archæology tell rather against the theory than for it, and there is no means of identifying the real writers of either J, E, D, or P.

What, then, are the clues which have led to such a remarkable change in view as to the date and authorship of the five books of Moses? If the basic clues inspire confidence, the theory demands careful sifting; if not, it is too fantastic to deserve a thought.

As stated by the critics themselves, there are three main clues.¹

(1) Astruc's Clue (1753). Certain passages in Genesis call God JHWH (Jehovah), and in others He is referred to as Elohim. This is interpreted to mean a difference in authorship.

¹ Quoted from *The Bible and Modern Thought*, Cohu, 1920. An able advocate of the critical view.

(2) De Wette's Clue (1805). The laws of Moses are ignored until the time of Josiah ; then we begin to hear of the central sanctuary prescribed in Deuteronomy xii. Moreover the literary style, and moral and religious tone of the books, are centuries ahead of Moses' day.

(3) Graf's Clue (1866). There are three stages in the development of Israelitish religion. JE correspond to a stage, running up to the time of Josiah, when God might be worshipped anywhere, at any shrine, any layman could offer his sacrifice, and images of Jehovah were tolerated. D corresponds to a stage when worship was centralized at Jerusalem, and priests and Levites only might minister at the altar. After the Exile, a full and complicated ritual was laid down by P, and only priests could minister.

Other reasons are alleged for rejecting the history. It is conclusive for Kuenen, one of the most influential critics, that the Israelitish patriarchs all bear the names of tribes, so that of course they are not individuals at all, but tribes personified. This argument seems to be found very convincing by many, but surely it is enough to reply that Abraham, Isaac, Joseph and Lot do not give names to tribes ; that of some of the patriarchs nothing is recorded, and that the names Aberamu, Jacob-el, and Josephel have been found as personal names in inscriptions of the period.¹ It is further objected by Colenso that the books are full of arithmetical absurdities, which we shall refer to later.

Back of all these difficulties, however, there looms another, which is the real driving power of critical theories. It is a rooted distaste for the miraculous, and for prediction. With many, there is further a complete denial of a Divine revelation in the Old Testament. Even those who acknowledge a measure of Inspiration (Driver, Davidson, König, etc.) are apt to be shy of the miraculous, whereas if there is any force in the contentions of our previous chapter a certain amount of miracle would appear to be essential to the earlier stages of God's education of the world. The critic accuses the traditionalist of prejudging the question to save the credit of the Lord Jesus Christ ; does he never prejudge it himself, by all means to avoid a miracle ?

Let us then test the three clues.

That there is a curious problem connected with the distribution of the Divine names, especially in Genesis, is patent to every attentive reader. Compare, for instance, Genesis i.

¹ See also König, *Expositor*, Feb. 1921, p. 81.

with ii. after verse 4. The passages where the English Version translates "LORD" are attributed to J, where the translation is "GOD" they are divided between E and P. It is maintained that there are slight differences in style between J and E, and marked differences between these and P, and also that the same event is recorded twice by different narrators, the best examples being the Creation-story, by P and J, and Abraham's denial of his wife, by J and E.

Now, we cannot attempt here to embark on a detailed discussion of this at first sight simple, but in fact most complicated, question. Those who wish really to understand it are referred to the authorities mentioned at the end of this chapter. We may make, however, the following remarks. Elohim several times occurs in J passages (Gen. iii. 1; xvi. 13), and JHWH in E passages (Gen. xxii. 11, 14), and that in spite of the fact that the theorists cut up the paragraphs and even the verses mercilessly to avoid discrepancies of this sort; e.g. the E narrative in Genesis xx. is supposed to end with the last verse but one of the story, because LORD occurs in that verse! Neither J, E, nor P make up anything like a connected narrative; almost every incident in the life of each patriarch owes something to two or more of them. Surely the more probable explanation of the difference in usage is that the writer is guided by the sense and bearings of his subject; when God the Ruler of nations is referred to, Elohim is more often used; when it is God keeping covenant with His own people, the name is usually Jehovah, and particularly after His special revelation of Himself by that name in Exodus vi. 3. Also, the critical theory obscures the fact that other names are used besides Jehovah and Elohim, e.g. Lord God in Genesis ii.; El Elyon in Genesis xiv. 18; Adonai in Genesis xv. 2, and frequently after; El Shaddai and El Olam several times. Why not postulate new writers for each of these?

The whole subject has recently been rendered even more complicated by evidence adduced by Dahse,¹ Weiner² and others that the Hebrew text now in our hands may not contain the Divine names in the form in which they were originally written. The Hebrew text from which the various Greek, Latin and Syriac versions were taken by no means always agrees with our Massoretic text in this particular. There were periods in Jewish history when they shrank from usin

¹ *A Fresh Investigation of the Sources of Genesis*, S.P.C.K., 1914.

² *Journ. of Trans. Victoria Instit.*, 1919, p. 160, and *Essays in Pentateuchal Criticism*,

the name Jehovah. There are Jehovistic and Elohist versions of some psalms (e.g. xiv. and liii. ; lxx. and part of xl.). The word Baal seems at first to have been untainted by idolatry, and there is some evidence that it may in course of time have been deleted and another word or name substituted. Perhaps it once stood for God.

Duplicate narratives do not always prove two narrators, because similar events may happen twice. It may have been Abraham's settled policy to call Sarah his sister, and the stories are by no means identical. On the same theory, a straightforward history of Napoleon must be supposed to have had two authors ; if one tells us that he was banished to Elba, it must be another's version that says he was sent to St. Helena. If at Elba he chanced to be called Napoleon, and at St. Helena Bonaparte, that would settle it ! At the same time, it is not incredible that Moses may have made use of more than one document in writing the Genesis story, or Prof. Naville's suggestion may be correct, that Moses wrote in cuneiform, and that the " documents " of the critics may represent separate tablets. He believes that the first tablet ended at Genesis ii. 4, and the second at chapter v. 1, which he translates, with the Septuagint, " This is the book of the generation of mankind." Naville also lends the weight of his great authority to the suggestion that Abraham may have brought the originals of these tablets from Ur.¹ We conclude, then, that the Astruc clue by no means proves several post-Mosaic writers.

We turn to consider the de Wette clue. It is alleged that in the days of the Judges and Samuel and the earlier kings we hear nothing of the levitical observances and there is no centralized worship, until in the reign of Josiah the book of the law is found in the temple by Hilkiah, and then as prescribed by Deuteronomy the altars on the " high places " are broken down, and the people are brought to the temple at Jerusalem to offer their sacrifices. Now is this true ?

It is common ground, of course, that the observances prescribed by the law of Moses are not very prominent in the story of the judges and the earlier kings, and also that there were frequently grave lapses and irregularities. The critics seem to take it for granted that if Israel had known of these laws, complicated and burdensome as they were, they would undoubtedly have obeyed them. But surely nations like individuals often fail to live up to their best ideals, and it is

¹ Naville, *Journ. Trans. Victoria Instit.*, 1915, p. 329.

the central lesson on the pages of Judges, Samuel and Kings that they knew the better and did the worse. Even after the awful warning of the Captivity their practice though better was by no means perfect. Again, in the nature of things, a central worship and a full obedience of the law were impossible unless peace and settled conditions prevailed, and in those days the land was continually overrun by Philistines and other enemies. And once again, does silence really prove anything? To take a parallel case, are we likely to conclude that there was no public worship in England, no churches and cathedrals and ceremonies, because Shakespeare so seldom alludes to them? He never mentions Canterbury, St. Paul's, Winchester, or Durham cathedrals; does that prove that they were not yet built? However, this is a matter in which every Bible reader can judge for himself, if he will go through, shall we say, the books of Samuel and find what, if any, of the levitical observances are mentioned. There is a single high priest, a tabernacle, an ark; Elkanah goes up regularly to worship and bring sacrifices; the priests must burn the fat; in accordance with the law of Numbers vi. 5, no razor is to come on the head of Samuel or Samson; the family of Aaron had been chosen for the priesthood, to burn incense and wear an ephod; the offerings made by fire were to be theirs. We read of the lamp burning in the sanctuary, and in the same chapter "the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged (the levitical word for atonement is used) with sacrifice nor offering for ever." We read of judgments because the ark was improperly handled by the laity. A lamb is offered for a whole burnt offering. It is wrong to eat blood. Sanctification is needed before sacrifice, and Saul knows all about ceremonial uncleanness. The showbread is mentioned, and the Urim, and it is wicked to resort to necromancers. In 2 Samuel vi. we read of burnt offerings and peace offerings, and of judgments and statutes, and of the cherubim over the ark. And yet we are invited to believe that in David's time the law of Moses had never been written, because it is passed over in silence! But, it is argued, all these references may be later interpolations. Why? Interpolations occur in some texts of the Bible, but they show themselves, either by being omitted in other manuscripts, or by leaving a clear consistent sense when they have been removed, but the above references occur in all the authorities for the text, and if they are torn out of the story it is left full of obvious holes. Besides, any wild theory can be "proved" if one may simply blot out without rhyme or reason all the

opposing evidence. "Well," says the critic, "perhaps these things were practised, although they had never been written down." Perhaps so, but by this time the de Wette clue has become no longer an argument pro, but an almost insuperable objection to the critical theory. We have been content to put in only Samuel in evidence, leaving the reader to add Judges, Kings, Chronicles (which, though written late, draws on early sources), and the pre-exilic prophets, if he will take the trouble to search through them. We will just draw attention to one verse, Hosea viii. 12 (R.V.), undoubtedly written long before Josiah's time: "Though I write for him my law in ten thousand precepts." Can this possibly refer to anything besides the books of Moses?

De Wette goes on to say that no one in Moses' day would have had the education to write such books, and that they show a morality and religion centuries ahead of that time. De Wette wrote in 1805, and we have learned much since then. Evidence will be adduced in our next section to show how wonderful the literature of that and even earlier ages, discovered to us by the archæologist, really was, and the argument has had to be altered. It now takes the form of a confident assertion that there is a sort of natural history of religions; they start with nature and ancestor worship, proceed to polytheism and idolatry, and may end in monotheism which has at length discarded idolatry. This last stage, it is alleged, was not reached until the times of the later prophets. The possibility of Revelation, it will be observed, is quite ignored.

That nature worship, totemism, animism and ghost worship are now and have been in the past, very widely prevalent is of course common ground, and a great body of information has been collected on the subject of late years; but like all specialists, the students of this interesting topic are too much inclined to see their speciality everywhere. There is no evidence for the alleged law of evolution of religions. Where is there in the whole world an example of a religion known to have begun with animism and passing through polytheism and idolatry to end in monotheism? The only pure monotheisms now in the world are Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism, and all these are based on the religion of Israel. So far as it goes, the evidence is that religions do not evolve into something better, but deteriorate into something worse. Compare the worship of Varuna in the Rig-Veda with the rites and creeds of modern Hinduism, and compare mediæval and modern Romanism with primitive Christianity. There

is nothing to show that monotheism may not be the primitive belief of mankind, but "as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts and creeping things," as Paul tells us in Romans. A statue of Palæolithic man kneeling in prayer has been found in a French cave, with bones of Ice Age animals, and it is known that the extinct Tasmanians, although they had no temples, no organized priesthood and no religious ceremonies, believed in a Supreme God, with minor deities.¹ This is true of other tribes besides. As already mentioned, the oldest manuscript in the world, the Prisse papyrus, contains a reference to the one overruling God (? 4450 B.C.). "For examples of a contrary tendency, in which a higher form of religion has historically developed out of animism, we look in vain in the actual world, and must turn to the world of imagination and hypothesis. This is in itself a sufficient refutation of the theory that all religion sprang from a belief in ghosts. A theory which does not rest upon a large number of actually observed facts is so absolutely unscientific that it requires no serious refutation."²

We turn now to the Graf clue. It is maintained that up to the time of Josiah, when Deuteronomy appeared, God might be worshipped anywhere, at any shrine; any layman could offer his sacrifice, and images of Jehovah were tolerated. Numerous altars are spoken of in Judges, Samuel and Kings, especially on high places; Samuel, Saul, David and Solomon are said to have offered sacrifices, and Micah's image, the teraphim kept by Michal, David's wife, and the calves set up by Jeroboam are instanced as proving the last point. It is admitted, of course, by all that in Deuteronomy xii. it is commanded that there should be one central sanctuary, but this was to be only when "ye dwell in safety," and in Deuteronomy xxvii. another altar was to be built on Mount Ebal. In the days when Israel was backsliding, and every few years an enemy overran the country, of course there could not be a central altar, but there were times when they did their best to maintain one. There was one at Shiloh in Eli's day. David and Solomon spent a fortune to build a sanctuary, and from that time other altars are spoken of as wrong (1 Kings iii. 2, 4; xv. 14; xxii. 43, etc.). Then as to the offerer, Samuel was

¹ *Traces of Religious Belief of Primæval Man*, Whitley, *Journ. of Trans. Victoria Instit.*, 1915, p. 125.

² *Religio Critici*, p. 88.

evidently reckoned a priest on account of the death of Eli and his sons ; it is by no means clear that David or Solomon did more than give the animals for sacrifice (Solomon could not have himself offered 22,000 oxen at once), and Saul was severely censured for offering a burnt offering with his own hand. As for the images, the story of Micah seems to be put in as the height of religious apostasy, as the narrative following is the height of moral apostasy, in a day when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes"—the tragic conclusion of the book of Judges. What Michal's images may have been we can only guess ; it is not the only instance in history when a wife has secretly cherished something that would have horrified her husband. And as for the calves at Bethel, they are always spoken of with condemnation by the writers of Kings and Chronicles, and also, far earlier, by Amos and Hosea (Amos iv. 4 ; v. 4, 5 ; Hosea viii. 5, 6, R.V.).

The theory goes on to maintain that Leviticus presupposes the laws of Deuteronomy, but surely the evidence is all in favour of the view which has prevailed unquestioned for thousands of years, that Deuteronomy is unintelligible to one who does not know the legal parts of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, which the Graf theory gives to P, at the end of the Exile. Even Driver allows that Deuteronomy xiv. 4-20 presupposes Leviticus xi. 2-23 ; Deuteronomy xxiv. 8 expressly refers back to the levitical law of leprosy ; the Deuteronomy account of Moses being forbidden to enter Canaan looks back to Numbers (a P section).

These are the three main clues relied on by the critical theory. If it be alleged that the real strength thereof does not stand in any tangible argument, but in a multitude of trivial points, the answer is that such evidence is very personal and liable to yield any result that is expected ; the reader may see in the books by the defenders of the traditional view a detailed criticism of scores of such minor points, and as many more that tell in favour of the other side.

We have looked, then, at the strong, compelling proofs that have led so many to accept the documentary theory. Let us inquire whether this leads to satisfactory results, and also whether there is anything to be said for the older view.

First, the fact emerges that although in the earlier chapters of Genesis there are many correspondences with what we know of the very early literature and inscriptions of Babylon, as soon as the story of Abraham is left behind and that of Joseph comes in, all traces of Babylonian influence die out, and a strong

Egyptian colouring appears. This is shown in many ways and seems to be too far-reaching to be due to art. There are Egyptian words, e.g. *ab*, meaning "inspector" (Gen. xlv. 8); *abrek*, meaning doubtful (Gen. xli. 43); *akhu*, the special word for the swampy pasture-lands near the Nile (Gen. xli. 2); *shesh*, an Egyptian linen (Gen. xli. 42, etc.); *ye'or*, the Egyptian name for a river, found often in the Pentateuch and later books but almost only in reference to Egyptian rivers. There are Egyptian proper names, Zaphnath-Paaneah, Asenath, Potiphar and Potiphra. Many critical textbooks (Driver, etc.) repeat an old assertion that these names are late Egyptian, but recent investigation shows that they also fit in with the type of names in the dynasty of the Exodus (Lieblein). The order of thought, and of words in sentences, is like the Egyptian, and unlike Babylonian (in Ezekiel, a Babylonian order tends to appear). The court, holy place and Holy-of-holies in the tabernacle is on the plan of an Egyptian house or temple, and quite unlike the Babylonian. Egyptian habits are introduced without explanation; the Hebrews did not shave (*see* several interesting references in the books of Samuel), but Joseph shaved himself to go to Pharaoh; "every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians," because that was close to the time of Egypt's conquest by the Hyksos or Shepherd-kings. In Genesis xlvii. 31, "Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head" as he took an oath from Joseph; "upon his staff," the old Greek translation, made in Egypt, reads; and now we know that the official oath in Egypt was to swear "on the wood," though we are not quite sure what it means.¹ Evidently Moses wrote an old Egyptian word, whose meaning was forgotten. Yet the critics would have us believe that all this was written by JE, after David's time, and by P, during the Babylonian captivity! Had they all gone to live in Egypt, to fit themselves for the task? How did P manage to avoid Babylonian influence, in which he had been born and brought up? Anyone who remembers extracting lists, in school, of the anachronisms in, shall we say, Shakespeare's "Julius Cæsar," will know that the avoidance of false local colouring was not a strong point with the older writers, and in this case the argument seems conclusive that the story of Joseph and the Exodus was written by some one who had lived in the Egypt of that day.

We turn to other points. During the later monarchy and

¹ For Egyptian influence in the Pentateuch, *see* Kyle, *Moses and the Monuments*, 1920. Also many customs quoted by Orr.

the Exile, God was usually referred to as the Lord of Hosts. The political and religious centre of all their thinking was Jerusalem. In their worship, singing took a prominent place. Yet not one of these appears in the Pentateuch.¹ This is quite simple if it had been written long before; it is very surprising if D and P had a hand in it.

Consider again. *Why* did D, and why did P, write all this, and use such art to get it all accepted as a work of Moses? and how was it that nobody seems to have suspected the imposition? Did they stain the parchment to make it look centuries old? It is useless for the critics to pretend that there is not a moral issue involved, and for them to say that there was no intention to deceive and that nobody was deceived; the cheat, if we can believe that the inventors of the highest code of morals the world had ever seen were guilty of it, was almost magically successful, and reform swept the kingdom. Take D—who wrote it? certainly not a prophet; it is all ritual. Not a Jerusalem priest, because it lays down that he is to share all his tithes with the Levites, who on the critical theory were the priests of the provincial high places! It must have been a thoroughly unpopular discovery for the unspiritual among the people, for it made them pay tithes. And what an extraordinary book it is for its alleged purpose—to centralize worship at Jerusalem! There is only one inconspicuous reference to that subject; for the rest, the book is hopelessly antiquated in its interests—talks of all Israel still as one, though the ten tribes had disappeared long ago, lays down laws for sieges, for sanitary arrangements in camp, that they must exterminate the Canaanites and Amalekites, and must not choose a foreigner as king! It is all about as suitable as a newly discovered Henry VIII code of laws would be to us to-day.

Take P. This is supposed to have been drawn up specially as a code-book for the second Temple, with its priests, porters, Nethinim and singers. Yet these three last are never mentioned! It speaks of an ark, and of the Urim, but these were now lost for ever. It contemplates a portable tent, but the new temple was to be a stone building. It brings in new tithes, and a complicated ceremonial of the day of Atonement, purporting to be of age-long antiquity but really quite new; did the aged men who wept when they compared the present poor foundation with the temple of their childhood never mention that these new-fangled laws and ceremonies had never

¹ Salem and Moriah are mentioned once each

been heard of in their young days? The levitical tithe-law contemplates many Levites and few priests; in Ezra's day there were ten times as many priests as Levites, and the financial arrangements were clearly unworkable. The tabernacle service was quite suitable and in keeping with the wilderness experience, though circumcision, and perhaps other ordinances, were not all faithfully observed. That it was given by Moses in the wilderness is a natural conclusion; that it first saw the light, and was accepted as Mosaic, during the Exile, puts a great strain on credulity. "But," says the critic, "though the writing was new, the laws may have been observed long before as a sort of tradition." Then what becomes of the de Wette and Graf clues, the pillars on which all this theorizing has been built up, that these laws must have been newly written, because the pre-exilic prophets and historians betray no knowledge of them?

Let us have a look at the external evidence. True, it is scanty enough; we are dealing with a remote age, and there are few literary remains. There is the question of the Samaritan Pentateuch. The Samaritans were settlers brought in by the Assyrians to people the depopulated country that had been inhabited by the ten tribes. Long before the Christian era, and right down to our own times, they have held their own version of the Pentateuch sacred, but did not accept the prophets or other books of the Jewish Bible. Their version is obviously based on an ancient text of the Hebrew Pentateuch. They offered their sacrifices on Mount Gerizim down to about the middle of the last century. The crucial point is, when did they get their book? On a straightforward interpretation of the historical record in the Bible, this is quite clear from 2 Kings xvii. 24-41, and confirmed by Ezra iv. 2. They got all their knowledge of the prescribed method of sacrificing to God from a Jewish priest sent them by Esar-haddon, king of Assyria. At that early time, the prophets and historical books were not reckoned as Scripture, so they were not taken up. All this is, of course, absolutely fatal to the critical theory, for D and P were not yet written! An attempt is made to save the situation by guessing that one Manasseh, mentioned in a very garbled story by Josephus, may have taken the book to the Samaritans in the days of Nehemiah. Josephus says nothing about this, and his Manasseh lived a century later! This seems quite incredible. The long-drawn hostility between the Jews and Samaritans had already commenced in Zerubabel's time (Ezra iv.), and is it possible that after this they

should gratefully accept the P document, lately written up by their enemy Ezra or his friends? There is other evidence that the Samaritans got their book before the Exile. There is some confusion in it between the letters d and r,¹ and also between m and n, which could not have arisen in the post-exilic scripts, but only in the very early angular Zidonian characters or in the still earlier form of letters found in the Siloam inscription of Hezekiah's reign, and the stela of Mesha, king of Moab, contemporary with Ahab: further, the Samaritan script agrees with these inscriptions in separating its words by dots, which the later Hebrew does not do. The Samaritan has no gutturals; this goes to show that their pronunciation dates from the time when in the days of Ahab and his successors the non-guttural Phœnician speech was popular in Israel.² One would have thought that this evidence alone would have put the critical theory of D and P out of court.

The Elephantine papyri include a letter to Bagohi, dated 407 B.C., proving that the Jews had a temple in Egypt before 525 B.C., which refers to Meal and Burnt Offerings and to frankincense.

When we ask the critics why they ascribe JE to the time of Solomon and not earlier, the more candid (Driver, etc.) admit that "conclusive criteria fail us." They advance no serious reasons why the writing may not have been much earlier. Then why not by Moses?

The simple fact is, that a study of style, by itself, is not enough to decide questions of authorship, at any rate in little scraps as has been tried in the Pentateuch. During the war there was an amusing instance of this. A letter appeared in the *British Weekly* (October, 1916), signed "Higher Critic," giving wonderful reasons for concluding that a leading article in a certain paper, usually written by Mr. Garvie, was on this occasion from the pen of Mr. Winston Churchill, whose style was unmistakable! Alas, the author traduced was not dead, like D and P, and next week there was a confession that neither Mr. Garvie nor Mr. Churchill had had anything to do with it!

As Prof. Orr says, "It will, we venture to predict, be to future generations one of the greatest psychological puzzles of history how such a hypothesis, loaded, as we believe it to be, with external and internal incredibilities, should have

¹ These letters are very like in the square Hebrew (Ashurith), but that is much later.

² Thomson, *Journ. of Trans. Victoria Instit.*, 1920 p. 142.

gained the remarkable ascendancy it has over so many able minds." Unfortunately, in science as well as in theology (in Physiology, for instance), there is nowadays an enormous output of ill-digested theories, which everybody quotes so as to demonstrate that they are up to date, but which very badly want a severe sifting out.

Now, finally, let us start where we ought to begin with every author, and let us make the simple assumption that perhaps the writers of the Old Testament may have been honest men who did try to tell the truth, and what do we find?

We find that the absolute confidence expressed by the Apostles, by Josephus, and by Philo, that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, is shared by all the Old Testament writers. Take a concordance, look up "Moses," and see the scores of testimonies, in nearly every book, such as "It is written in the law of Moses" (1 Kings ii. 3). In the Book of Joshua the references are particularly frequent, and presumably that is our oldest authority. Come next to the five books themselves. Again and again we are told that Moses wrote the law in a book (Exod. xvii. 14; xxiv. 4; Deut. xxxi. 9, 22); also that he kept a record of history (Num. xxxiii. 2). Where he writes of the past, as in Genesis, a very long history is compressed into a small compass, and it is at least possible that separate documents are incorporated. When he writes of his own times, the narrative swells out, and it reads like a journal. Fresh revelations from God are included as they come to him. There is an atmosphere of Egypt and the deserts. Certain pet phrases are met with both in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, as "A land flowing with milk and honey"; "Keep my commandments, and do them." There is a unity of plan throughout.¹ The natural conclusion is that the laws, discourses and history are substantially Mosaic. This does not preclude the possibility that the materials may have been worked over and pieced together by an editor. No Biblical writer says that the whole book in its present form is by Moses. There are copyists' or editors' additions in the received text of the New Testament; volumes of Tennyson are published with an editor's additions and notes. The last chapter of Deuteronomy may well be due to an editor; so may Deuteronomy iii. 14, and the description of Moses' meekness. Whether the editorial element

¹ See Finn, *Mosaic Origin of Pentateuch*, *Journ. of Trans. Victoria Instit.*, 1918, p. 32.

is large, or small, or absent altogether, it is the province of reverent criticism to determine, but the data are likely to be so scanty that the conclusions must be very tentative.

THE HISTORY OF THE PENTATEUCH

Is the history related in the five books of Moses, and Joshua, credible?

We admit, at the outset, that if it is to be an axiom that the miraculous is necessarily false, these narratives cannot stand. But if the reader is willing to make the tentative concession that given an adequate reason for it, one might allow the possibility of a miracle, then we may proceed to look at the evidence, without repeating the general arguments on this subject set forth in the previous chapter. This much at least has to be admitted, that the prophets and other Old Testament writers all believed in the Exodus, and also that something very wonderful had happened. Nations are never wrong about the main event in their history; they may distort the truth, but they do not make up a disgraceful tale about having been a slave race if it is not true. It has to be admitted, too, that the picture drawn of the patriarchs is very true to life; their wanderings, their tents, their flocks and herds, their simple worship and their standard of morality. All this is very credible.

When we come to the story of the plagues, too, there is an astonishing correspondence to facts, which has only lately been recognized. The plagues are not far-fetched marvels, but it would appear that God took up the natural visitations of the country, in their natural season, and by one of those overrulings, partly miraculous and partly providential, hurled them upon Egypt in one year of appalling disasters.

The red or bloody Nile is a rare occurrence due to fungi appearing just before the annual rise, and the people still dig about the river to get clear water. Frogs follow the inundations. Lice and flies are always present. In modern history boils in man are apt to follow after rinderpest in beasts. Hailstorms are rare in Egypt, but when they occur it is just at the time indicated in Exodus. The darkness probably refers to a severe visitation of the dreaded *Khamseen* laden with sand.¹

¹ The pestilence (of 1 Samuel v.) that punished the Philistines when they had taken the ark was surely bubonic plague. The widespread

In the story of the Exodus, some arithmetical difficulties have been found, and made the most of by Colenso, but they vanish away under the analysis of Orr, Finn and others, and need not be slain again here. It has also been objected that the numbers seem very large, and that the desert could not sustain them—and, indeed, manna and quails and water had to be provided—and that the Sinai desert tribes were not likely to oppose a serious resistance, as we are told they did. It is, however, by no means certain whether the Sinai of Moses is the same as the peninsula called Sinai by the mediæval monks; Sayce thinks it was in Arabia Petræa, where the traveller still finds the remains of a large population in a country that is now a sandy desert. It is admitted that since the Hebrews represented numbers by letters, with only dots to mark thousands, there is great scope for copyists' errors all through the Old Testament.

The date of the Exodus is so remote, and the remains of that period so scanty, that it could scarcely be expected that any external evidence may be got by archæologists to throw light on Pentateuchal history. Yet so much has been obtained, and of such a nature, that several archæologists who started as believers in the late documentary theory of the books of Moses have come to accept his authorship (Sayce, Hommel, Halévy), and others like Naville are staunch defenders of the traditional view. The most interesting discoveries for our purpose are the general evidences of early culture, the code of Hammurabi (the Amraphel of Gen. xiv. 1), the history and mummies of the Pharaohs, the Tel el-Amarna tablets, and the stela of Menephtah.

When the documentary theory was launched, a principal argument was, that the standard of education, morals and religion in Moses' day was so humble that he could not possibly have written such a book. We know now that one of the towns captured by Joshua in Canaan was called Kiriath-sepher, or "book-town"; that Sargon had a library in Accad more than a thousand years before Abraham. We know that the Hittites were a great nation with wonderful buildings (some of their sculptures may be seen in Liverpool Museum). If Moses was brought up by Pharaoh's daughter, it is now quite certain that he would be a literary man and know several written languages.

epidemic extending from town to town, the buboes in the groins, and the large number of dead rats or mice, not distinguished in Hebrew, that were seen lying about, all point in this direction.

The code of Hammurabi was found at Susa in 1902. It dates from 2100 B.C., yet its contents often strangely resemble the levitical laws. The laws of marriage and divorce, murder, incest, adultery, etc., are just like those of Israel. It provides that a childless wife may give her maid to be a concubine, and directs what is to be done if this leads to disputes, as it did between Sarah and Hagar. Further, it has been found that there was at that time an Elamite king of Babylon, and the name Kudur-Lagamar has been identified, and these kings claimed sovereignty over Palestine. Also there was then a king, Eri-aku, of Larsa. Thus modern research has found three out of the four kings of Genesis xiv., Amraphel, Chedorlaomer and Arioch—and yet this chapter was supposed by Wellhausen, Kuenen and the rest to be a post-exilic romance by P or later still!

Something is now known of the various Egyptian dynasties. The Pharaoh of Joseph's day has been identified with great probability with Apepi, one of the last of the Hyksos kings, who would be much more likely to look with favour on a Palestinian than a native Egyptian king. Apepi was a worshipper of a single God, and ruled over all Egypt from a capital in the Delta; there is ancient tradition that he was Joseph's Pharaoh. When Jacob died, Joseph was in a position to give his father a handsome funeral; when he died himself, perhaps the Hyksos dynasty had passed (*see* Gen. l. 25). After the expulsion of the invaders, came the XVIII and XIX dynasties, the period of Egypt's greatness. In the XVIII were Aahmes, Thothmes I, II and III, Amenophis II, III and IV; Thothmes III was a great conqueror in Syria, and also a builder—the well-known pictures of brick-making shown in all books on Egypt and in museums, with the words "Be not idle" in the mouths of the overseers, belong to this reign (*Exod.* v. 17). In the XIX dynasty were Seti, Ramesses II and Menephtah. According to the generally received account, Ramesses was the Pharaoh of the oppression. He was a most prolific builder all over Egypt. Naville has discovered the city Pi-tum (*see* *Exod.* i. 11; v. 7, 12) and found the inscription on the gate, by Ramesses, "I built Pi-tum at the mouth of the east." The walled city can still be plainly seen, with the fortress, temple, parade-ground, etc. The lower courses of the wall are laid with brick filled with good chopped straw; the upper courses made of brick have in them no binding material whatever, and the middle courses are made of brick filled with stubble pulled up by the roots. "The impress of

the roots is as plainly marked in the brick as though cut by an engraver's tools" (Kyle). The Pharaoh of the Exodus, then, would be Menepthah, who had a most disastrous reign. In a stela of his lately discovered, the words occur "Canaan the victim of all ills; taken is Asqelon led out with Gezer; Yenoamam is made nought; Israel is destroyed, her seed is not." This was in Menepthah's fifth year, and would correspond to the time when the Israelites were defeated at Hormah, and turned to wander nearly forty years in the wilderness. No wonder he thought they were done with! It is not certain, however, that Ramesses and Menepthah are the two Pharaohs mentioned in Exodus. It would seem to suit the Biblical chronology better if Thothmes III was the oppressor, and Amenophis II the one in whose reign the Israelites escaped. This king, according to his monuments, was a particularly cruel and bloodthirsty warrior, fighting in Syria, Libya and Nubia. Like all these ancient kings, he only describes his successes; no Egyptian monarch would be likely to tell us the disastrous story of the escape of the Hebrews and the calamity in the Red Sea. Ramesses II had a habit of appropriating his predecessor's monuments and putting his own name on them; Cleopatra's Needle, now on the Thames Embankment, is a case in point, for it originally belonged to Thothmes III. It is suggested by the advocates of the earlier date that Ramesses put his name on Pi-tum, but that Thothmes may have built it.

In 1887, a mass of inscribed tablets was discovered at Tel el-Amarna, written in the Babylonian cuneiform character, and consisting of the official correspondence from the Egyptian governors in Palestine, which at that time was more or less subsidiary to the Pharaohs, to Amenophis III and IV. This shows the literary culture of the Egyptian court. The letters relate that the whole south of Palestine was being overrun by a people coming up from Seir, called the Khabiri. There are letters from Abdi-Khiba, king of Jerusalem, saying that the Khabiri have devastated all the king's territory, occupied all his cities, "there remains not one prince to my lord the king"—"if no troops come, the whole territory of my lord the king will be lost." Amenophis IV, however, was in far too much trouble at home to send help to the Canaanites. It is certainly very tempting to identify these Khabiri, or Habiru, with the Hebrews, and to see here the wars of Joshua related by the other side. There was a very masterful princess, named Hatasu, daughter of Thothmes I, who more or less

dominated Egypt in the reign of his successors, whom some identify with Moses' patroness.

By an astonishing Providence, the mummies of all these kings have been preserved and found, and they are now in the museum at Cairo. Carved figures of them as they appeared in life are also available for our inspection. One sometimes hears preachers say that Pharaoh was drowned in the Red Sea, but the Bible never tells us so (in Psalm cxxxvi. the Hebrew is "shook off"). In a medical paper there was recently published the account of a post-mortem examination on Menepthah! The mummy of a daughter of Ramesses II has also been found.

There is an Egyptian romance called *The Tale of the Two Brothers*, dating from the XIX dynasty, so like the story of Joseph's temptation by Potiphar's wife, that it seems it must be founded on it. Another interesting discovery in Egypt is an inscription on an island in the Nile commemorating the fact that for seven consecutive years the river failed to rise; though not of Joseph's time, it shows how the famine he foretold would come about. It is to prevent this that British engineers have built the great dam across the Nile at Assouan. An inscription on the tomb of one Baba proves that there was a famine in Joseph's time, XVII dynasty (Sayce, from Brugsch).

Of late years much excavating has been done in Palestine, which has revealed the foundations of some of the cities of the kings of Israel and Judah, and also the older Canaanite cities taken by Joshua (Lachish, Gezer, etc.). One of the most interesting is Jericho. The enclosed area was small, only about ten acres, but the wall was sixteen feet high. There is evidence of a flaw in construction, though much of it was admirably conceived and put up, and it is suggested that when the inhabitants crowded on to the wall to see what the Israelites meant by their great shout, a considerable part of it collapsed. The ruins of one house built on the wall, presumably Rahab's, are still visible.

The history of the patriarchs and the Exodus, then, though full of wonderful dealings of God, is consistent with what we know of those times, and one may reverently believe that the inscriptions, buried cities, tablets and other relics have been preserved for us in such an extraordinary fashion to serve to reinforce our faith in the Word of God in a day of unbelief. Stones cry out.

BOOKS.

WRIGHT—*The Origin and Antiquity of Man* (Murray, 1913). Written by a front-rank scientific scholar, one of the principal authorities in America on his subject, and a believer in the Bible.

ORR—*The Problem of the Old Testament* (Nisbet, 1908).

FINN—*The Unity of the Pentateuch* (Marshall, 1920). Two scholarly works and both incorporating a great body of reverent research, which we have drawn on largely, but left much more behind.

KYLE—*Moses and the Monuments* (Scott, 1920). Valuable for its Egyptology.

Journal of Transactions of the Victoria Institute. Annually.

Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly. These periodicals keep the student abreast with modern archæological research on Biblical subjects.

CHAPTER IV

The Fact of Christ—the Problem Stated

THIS chapter is being written in 1921. Why 1921? Because, according to the time-honoured chronology, something stupendous happened 1,921 years ago in the world's history. That was the birth of Jesus Christ. Before that date, years are reckoned as B.C. Thus the fact of Christ has become the central point of the world's history. It ushered in the new age, which has profoundly influenced Europe, America, Australia and a large part of Asia and Africa. The same fact, for the past eighteen centuries, has ruled the destinies of nations—the Christian nations have formed a class apart from the non-Christian. And the individual's attitude to that great Person remains the crucial factor in life, character and destiny to-day. A sceptic would admit as much (perhaps not destiny). It is an undeniable fact that the sincere and earnest "Christian" develops a type of character, a motive in life and a set of associations that go far to distinguish him or her from a non-Christian. Let there be no possibility of mistake—this attitude to a Person is the essence of the Christian faith. It is a matter of relatively small importance for the non-Christian feeling his way towards faith, whether he believes in verbal inspiration, Jonah and the whale, or the Pentateuch. One may be a sincere Christian and yet be totally unconvinced by the chapter preceding this; or one may be orthodox in the strictest and most old-fashioned sense of the word, and yet not be a true "Christian" according to the original definition of the word as it was introduced at Antioch, because of a wrong attitude towards Christ—a defect of the will, and not of the intellect.

There is something striking and peculiar in this "centrality" of Christ. Other spiritual teachers of mankind have avoided it. Moses, Isaiah, John Baptist, Paul, Confucius, Gautama, Augustine, Martin Luther, John Wesley—all these have

regarded themselves as entrusted with great truths which they must efface their own personality to display. How otherwise it is with Christ! He constantly directs attention to Himself—"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life"; "I am the Resurrection"; "I am the Door"; "I am the Light of the world"; "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." He definitely built His church on the confession that He was the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

In view of these facts, and of His enormous influence over the history of continents, nations and individuals, and in view of the searching and surprising nature of His own claims on our attention, it becomes abundantly clear that no man or woman can afford to avoid coming to a definite conclusion about Him. To allow frivolity or worldly ambitions to turn away the attention from this problem is intellectual cowardice, and moral and spiritual suicide. Let us therefore examine some of the data, and see what conclusion they point to. In this chapter we shall take it that it is admitted that the four gospels were written by men more or less in touch with the events they record, and that they are as accurate as the history-writers of that period usually were. If this is not conceded, the question will be found argued in Chapter VI, which might be read first.

(I) THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. Men are mostly either humdrum, or specialists. Of the specialists, one can construct a catalogue of good, better and best. The singular and impressive fact about Jesus Christ, and that not only in the eyes of His devoted followers, is that in catalogue after catalogue of specialists He has to be put "best"—indeed, He occupies a class by Himself, in that in the "good" and "better" flaws can be found, but not in Him. John Stuart Mill, who will not be suspected of any leaning towards Christianity, wrote in his last work, "whatever else may be taken away by rational criticism, Christ is still left, an unique figure, not more unlike all His precursors than all His followers, even those who had the direct benefit of His personal teaching." He impressed even a man like Voltaire.

(a) Consider Him, first, as the specialist in character. This world has known great saints. Tastes would differ as to who should appear in the list—let us instance for our present purpose Francis Xavier, Madame Guyon, William Tyndale, Samuel Rutherford, Catherine Booth and Frances Ridley Havergal. But it is absurd to compare them with Him.

When we know their story fully, we can find faults in them all at some period of their lives, but not in Him. He towers over them as a snow-capped mountain over a hillock. Men are seldom strong *and* sweet. He was both. There was a perfect example of the character that can love the sinner and hate the sin. How vehemently He blazed out at hypocrisy, cruelty, irreverence, formalism and self-seeking, even when the great men of the day were guilty, and how tenderly He could deal with a little child or a penitent sinner—a Magdalene, or a Zaccheus, or a dying thief. In one of his famous sermons F. W. Robertson maintained that Christ embodies in Himself the perfection both of the masculine and the feminine characters, and that if this fact had been appreciated the adoration of the Virgin Mary would never have found the place that it has in historic Christendom. The masculine character is well seen in His courage. To face the certainty of death by torture for three years or more, and yet to walk steadfastly towards it with face set as a flint, is a living martyrdom few, if any, have ever faced for the sake of an ideal. There is an almost womanly tenderness in the way in which He takes little children in His arms, and weeps at Lazarus' grave even when He is about to raise him.¹

The cardinal Christian virtues are faith, hope and charity. He was the apotheosis of them all. Regarding Him just as a man, what stupendous faith in God it required, and what love for humanity—

“And didst Thou love the race that loved not Thee?”

—to suffer isolation, to pit Himself against the bureaucracy and the democracy alike, to refuse short cuts,² to expect His death to bring an atonement into the world, and to march steadily on to it. And He was the great Optimist, too. Whoever else expected to be raised within three days from the dead? Who else foresaw, in that day of national humiliation, the coming of the Kingdom of God? Who else had hope—nay, assurance—that out of the derelicts of humanity, broken by sin and by vice, veritable devil's castaways like the dying thief, the Magdalene, the woman of Samaria, and the publicans and prodigals of His parables, He could make saints? In G. F. Watts' famous picture, Hope is represented as blind, alone in the world, with every string of the harp broken but one; as Principal Cairns finely remarks, that seems incongruous

¹ Compare also the affectionate relations between John and the Lord, mentioned in the fourth gospel.

² Matt. iv. 8; John vi. 15.

as applied to Hope in our Lord Jesus Christ—the better picture is that of the Winged Victory of Samothrace, standing on tiptoe, face uplifted,¹ wings just spread.

Some of the virtues displayed in His character are all the more noteworthy because they ran counter to all the ideals of His day. That pure, overflowing love of His which embraced stranger and foreigner was one of these. "Love" was a tainted word. The translators of the Latin version did not care to use "amor" for Christian love—hence the "caritas" of the Vulgate, and the "charity" of the English version. So it becomes true that "whosoever loveth is born of God." Forgiveness was another. The current feeling of His time was well expressed by the inscription on the monument to Sulla at Rome: "No friend ever did me so much good, or enemy so much harm, but I repaid him with interest." Jesus forgave His very murderers. Thirdly, He taught and practised humility. He chose His disciples from the ignorant and lowly; He washed their dusty feet, and prepared their breakfast when they had fished all night and caught nothing.

But more remarkable than all this is the fact that He had no consciousness of sin. Both in the wilderness, and subsequently, He was tempted by the Devil. May not this explain the sudden and unexpected vehemence with which He burst forth, "Get thee behind Me, Satan," when Peter tried to turn Him out of the way to the cross? Yet He says, "Which of you convicteth Me of sin?"² All earth's saints have been the first to proclaim their consciousness of sin, and when foolish persons have been so presumptuous as to claim perfection, their friends, or their enemies, have soon been telling another story. But in none of His addresses or His prayers does He show the slightest sign of consciousness of imperfection, and friends and foes unite in witnessing to the elevation of His character. "In Him is no sin," says John.³ "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth," testifies Peter.⁴ "That righteous man," says Pilate's wife. "I have betrayed innocent blood," shrieked the traitor Judas, as he flung the thirty silver coins into the temple. "This man hath done nothing amiss," declared the thief on the cross. Pilate, Herod, the high priests, all the contemporary enemies of the Christian faith, can bring no charge against His character. His cousin John the Baptist did

¹ Probably. The figure is headless. Cairns, *Reasonableness of Christian Faith*, p. 123.

² John viii. 46.

³ 1 John iii. 5

⁴ 1 Peter ii. 22, 23.

not recognize Him as the Messiah at first, but knew so much of His holy life as to say, "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?"

There will be fault-finders, of course, who can detect flaws even in perfection, and always know a more excellent way. A few of these have ventured to attack solitary incidents. They have found disrespect in His "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" addressed to His mother—ignorant that the Greek word was perfectly respectful, and was sometimes addressed to a princess; and the words that follow, whilst asserting His independence of action, sound harsher in English than in the original. We are expressly told that He was subject to His parents at Nazareth, and when He was dying He provided His mother with a home. It would appear that He waited until He was thirty years of age before engaging in public ministry because He would not leave His widowed mother until His younger brothers were able to support her. Critics have found petulance in His condemnation of the barren fig-tree, but it was necessary to show the nation a sign of warning, and it was more merciful to execute this His one miracle of judgment on a tree than on a man or animal. They have alleged cowardice in the garden of Gethsemane, but what His soul cried out against was not torture and death so much as the loathsome burden He had to bear—the sin of the whole world. The very finest courage is not to be found in the coarse, unimaginative man who is never afraid, but in the one who realizes everything and who goes through with it in spite of a trembling body.

(b) But Jesus was not only the one Perfect Man in character. He stands in with the world's specialists as a moral teacher, and proves to be not only first of them all, but there is a quality of finality and perfectness about Him that they lack. This was evidently felt from the first. Men wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth, and they recognized that He taught as one having authority. He brushed aside the traditions of the elders; He ventured to supersede and amplify the fiery law of Moses, which was venerated then as no traditionalist has ever venerated it since. He discovered the individual. Although He looks for the coming of the perfect community, the Kingdom of God, nearly all His talk is of the individual and his or her relation to God. By His teaching of discipleship and salvation as depending not on a man's works but on an attitude to Himself, characterized sometimes as "believing," sometimes as

“receiving,” again as “obeying,” and yet again as “following,” He makes it possible, nay essential, to enforce a higher moral code than the world has ever seen, and yet to provide hope and deliverance for the old reprobate whose life has been squandered in wickedness. He can be profound, or He can appeal to the least intelligent by the use He makes of parables. It is ridiculous to discredit His teaching because some sentences from it can be paralleled in Hillel (a wise rabbi living just before Christ’s time), or the Greek or Oriental philosophers; grains of gold are more or less plentifully concealed in their writings by hundredweights of base metal, and the very little that we know of Hillel’s teaching was not committed to writing till he had been dead hundreds of years. Yet he is supposed by some rationalists (as Geiger, Renan) to have been Jesus’ master! One has only to compare the teaching of Christ on three or four representative subjects—for instance, on God, on forgiveness of sins, on the difference between formalism and reality in religion, and on moral purity—to realize how much surer is His touch, and how much more instinct with truth are His words, than those of His successors or His followers. No one who knows Socrates, or Seneca, or Marcus Aurelius would endorse all they teach, though here probably philosophy, apart from Christian influence, reached its highest attainment. Seneca, in spite of all his philosophy and ostentatious love of moderation and justice, was a great money-lender, and ruined scores of British landowners by calling in loans amounting to ten million sesterces without warning. This helped largely to bring about the slaughter of nearly 100,000 people in the revolt of Boadicea. The reign of Marcus Aurelius was more fatal to the Christians than that of the greatest tyrants; there was probably a latent bigotry in his character.

The only quarrel that men are likely to have with the teachings of Jesus is that they are transcendental—that the standard set is too high, too ideal, for this wicked world. To this the reply is twofold. He Himself lived up to the standard, and some of the very pick of His disciples, a few in a generation, have almost done so. If the majority of the people in this world did so, earth would be a paradise. Most of our social and international problems would be solved in a few years. Is not this true?

On the other hand, His teachings have been made to appear more transcendental than they are, by unimaginative, prosy literalists who have not troubled to understand His picturesque

modes of expression. It was just the same with His somewhat obtuse disciples ; when He talked about moral leaven they thought of bread ! When He says " Give to him that asketh thee," He does not mean us to give literally and always what is asked. Even God does not do that. He does not actually contemplate a man with a beam of timber in his eye removing coal-dust from his friend's cornea, nor does He expect us to see a camel going through the eye of a needle. None of the expressions in the Sermon on the Mount are as impossible as they seem.

(c) Great teachers and holy men are often veritable children in matters of practical wisdom, useful information and *savoir faire*, so much so, that the absent-minded saint or professor is a standing joke. Other men specialize in these things. Some one has written of the Duke of Wellington's " almost perfect judgment." But there has never been a man so well informed of things past, present, or future, so versed in the mystery of reading the hearts of those whom he met, as was the One Whom we are considering. Although He is constantly referring to Nature in a day when Nature was little understood, He makes no mistakes. Sometimes He uses popular rather than exact scientific language—as when He uses the illustration of a corn of wheat falling into the ground and dying—but He came to explain Divine things to an uneducated audience, and has no time to waste on irrelevant details ; after all, the husk of the wheat grain as it is seen clinging to the roots is dead, though the wheat-embryo lives. He foretells His death in considerable detail months before it happens, and the resurrection that shall follow ; He foresees the siege of Jerusalem ; He mentions beforehand about Judas' betrayal and Peter's denial ; and He knows all about the chequered married career of the woman of Samaria. He knew Lazarus was dead without being told. It was a matter of astonishment to the scribes that this Man knew " letters " (the same word that Festus used of Paul's " much learning "), although He had not a human teacher (John vii. 15).

This opens up a very wide and controversial subject, as to how far His knowledge extended. How are we to regard certain utterances which appear to contemplate that His second advent would take place within the lifetime of that generation, whereas it has not come to pass 1,900 years after ; and certain endorsements of Old Testament history and prophecy that modern criticism finds unacceptable ? How are we to understand His attitude towards demon-possession ?

We desire to make two propositions quite clear. The *first* is that it is intellectually possible to believe in His Deity and be a sincere Christian, and yet to regard His knowledge in these matters as limited. If this were not true, the corollary would be that one cannot be a Christian without believing in Moses and Jonah and Daniel, which is demanding more than the Apostles ever asked. We are definitely told that He emptied Himself, and we are also told that He did not know the time of His second coming; therefore to what extent, if any, His superhuman knowledge was limited becomes a matter for evidence, not speculation. The *second* is that we find it incredible that He should as a matter of fact have been so mistaken. It does not seem compatible with all else that we know of Him. We believe that the difficulties with regard to the second advent are artificial, and that the Old Testament is not unhistorical as many suppose. We need not here repeat what has been said in another chapter as to the reliability of the Pentateuch, and if that is conceded, the rest of the Old Testament will give little trouble.

Three passages have been quoted, in particular, to prove that Christ expected His second advent to take place within a generation; these are Matthew xvi. 28, Matthew xxiv., especially verses 29 ("immediately") and 34,¹ and John xxi. 22. It is readily admitted that both Christ and the New Testament writers taught their followers to expect that His coming might take place at any time, but these passages, rightly understood, do not prove that He promised that it should be within their lifetime. Matthew xvi. 28 and parallel passages probably had a double fulfilment; in each gospel it is immediately followed by the Transfiguration, and the promise may also refer to the events on the day of Pentecost. The Olivet discourse is recorded for us by two evangelists from a different point of view; Matthew tells us of the signs of a great and still future tribulation followed by the coming of the Son of Man (*see* verse 3, where the emphasis is on the Advent, not on the destruction of Jerusalem). The "immediately" of verse 29 is, therefore, quite in place. In Luke, the emphasis is entirely on the signs of the destruction of Jerusalem (Luke xxi. 7); in verse 25 there is no "immediately," but it speaks of a prolonged treading down of Jerusalem until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, then follow the warning tokens of the coming of the Son of Man. No doubt many

¹ The word *genea* means both "generation," and also "race"; the Jewish race has not passed away.

of the events that clustered about the last days of Jerusalem, before it was destroyed by Titus, furnish some analogy to, and have some elements in common with, those future signs and judgments which the Apocalypse is so full of, and which are also foreshadowed in the Matthew account of the Olivet discourse.

The statement concerning John, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" obviously conveys no prediction, as the narrator himself takes care to emphasize.

Another challenge that has been issued, with some claim to find Jesus mistaken, is that He accepted the Jewish notion that certain forms of mental infirmity, epilepsy, deaf-mutism and the like, were due to demon-possession, whereas modern medical science regards this as an exploded fallacy. But this is singularly weak. Are we never to believe what the Son of God tells us, unless we know it already from other sources? Three replies are possible to the challenge, any one of which is quite adequate apart from the others. The first is, that reputable experts in mental diseases are convinced that demon-possession exists to-day. (Some doctors, like the Sadducees of old, believe in neither angel nor spirit, and would not be likely to diagnose a case as demon-possession if they saw one.) There are descriptions of it in some textbooks.¹ It is far more often seen in the East than in Europe. Secondly, even if demon-possession does not exist to-day, that does not disprove the possibility, nay probability, that when the Son of God was manifested, evil powers appeared to oppose Him, and took possession of unfortunate human derelicts for the purpose. The demoniacs in the gospels use language which is seldom if ever heard from the ordinary inmates of a modern asylum, the spirit speaking through the mouth of the sufferer as a separate personality—"What have we to do with Thee, Thou Son of God? Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?" On another occasion the devils besought Him that they might go into the swine, and so on. These spirits appear to have recognized Him even when educated men did not. We may, of course, deny the historical reality of the narratives, but that raises greater difficulties than it solves, as we shall presently point out. Thirdly, what do we really know about the *ultimate* causation of mental diseases or epilepsy? A most careful post-mortem examination, naked-eye or microscopical, may show no abnormalities at

¹ E.g. Hack Tuke's *Dictionary of Psychological Medicine*, vol. 1, p. 352. For some non-medical descriptions of cases in China see Guinness' "Pastor Hsi," and booklets published by the China Inland Mission.

all. What is the ultimate cause of *any* disease? Some are due to bacterial invasion; some are not. Even in cases that are, healthy persons often carry the bacteria, and take no harm. A lowered resistance is required, we say. But why, in the last resort, are men and women, or certain men and women, subject to pain and illness and death? Are we quite sure that no spiritual adversary has any hand in it—in some cases, if not always? On one occasion, Jesus healed a woman who was suffering from what would now be called spondylitis deformans, the bones of her vertebral column being ossified into one rigid mass. There is no hint that the Jews, or the disciples, regarded this as a case of demon-possession, but the Lord asks, "Ought not this woman, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, to be loosed?" To pronounce in confident tones that Jesus attributed certain symptoms to a demon, but that we know it was only epilepsy, is an excellent example of the all-too-common mental attitude of the man who has solved any and every problem as soon as he has found it a label and a name.

We do not find, then, that there is any real evidence that Jesus made false prophecies or entertained mistaken ideas. We have yet to look at the practical wisdom with which He was accustomed to deal with every problem submitted to Him. Three shall serve.

On one occasion a coalition was formed against Him by two political extremes, the ultra-patriots and the satellites of King Herod's alien and Rome-supported court. The plot was well and truly laid. The ringleaders would keep out of sight themselves, and send their young followers wrangling and disputing the point among themselves, the one party against the other, to submit the problem respectfully to Him—shall we pay the Roman taxes, or not? The political situation was much like that in a Sinn Féin town in southern Ireland patrolled by representatives of the English Government. To say "Yes" exposed Him to anathema if not assassination by the populace; to say "No" was to court arrest by the authorities. A timid man would have evaded the risk of answering. He had not only a sound reply ready, but could turn defence into attack, and show them their sadly neglected duty to God. "Show Me a penny," He says (apparently He had none Himself), "whose is this image and superscription?" There were the cynical features of the Roman Emperor, and the words, or an abbreviation of them, TIBERIUS CÆSAR IMPERATOR. "You have accepted Cæsar's coinage;

you have thereby acknowledged his right to tribute. Pay him—and pay God His due, too.”

Our second illustration—a woman taken in the act of adultery is brought before Him by an influential crowd of Sanhedrists and teachers of the law. According to the law of Moses, she ought to be stoned, but the law has been a dead letter for many generations, killed by public opinion and the frequency of the offence. He has been preaching a higher standard of morality than Moses. What can He say? Eat His own words, openly defy the ancient Scriptures, or infuriate the people by what they will consider cruelty? Now notice the wisdom, the mercy, the reticence, and the power over conscience with which He deals with the case. Stooping down, after a pointed warning, He writes in the dust (so we may suppose) a woman’s name that makes the oldest, most vociferous graybeard in the front of the crowd stop shouting and suddenly turn pale—who could have imagined that He would have known of *that* incident?¹ He slunk away, and left the prosecution of the case to others, lest more should be written than he wanted them to see. So one by one they went out. If the woman had been hardened in sin, she would have gone, too. She was repentant; she wanted to hear if there was any hope of forgiveness, so she stayed. Therefore, He rejoiced to be able to say to her, “Neither do I condemn thee; sin no more.”

But this passage is in brackets in the revised Bible; it is only found in the Latin among the oldest versions; perhaps it formed no part of John’s original gospel. What matter? Of its great antiquity there is no doubt, and however we got it, it is utterly beyond the genius of any early Christian to have invented it; it is obviously true.

Our third illustration is very different; Jesus’ action is so subtle and unexpected that to this day many fail to understand it. His treatment of the situation is surprising, not because it is unusual in the great men of to-day, but because it is so unlike His ordinary readiness to help. A Syrian woman with a sick daughter, probably insane and violent, comes with hesitation and fear, but driven by need, to beg His assistance. She knows that Jews hate foreigners; those rough men around Him will repulse her if they can; probably He is too proud and exclusive to notice her, but she will venture. If all He desired

¹ This is not a new theory. It is implied in the reading of a tenth-century MS. Codex U, in St. Mark’s at Venice—admittedly not a first-class authority.

was to impress her that He was a good, kind gentleman, with marvellous healing virtues, He could have reassured her with His first word—nearly every one else who had such a sympathetic heart as His would have done so. But He saw here a rare plant that pleased Him intensely, and He must bring it to full flower, for her soul's sake. So all her fears come true; the disciples want to order her off; He speaks of the Syrians as dogs; He will do nothing for that accursed race. Yet her confidence holds; then He speaks the healing word, and her faith bursts suddenly into flower—without another plea she accepts His bare word, though she has seen nothing happen, and goes off triumphant. An ordinary suppliant would have dragged Him to the patient. These three incidents show in Him a *savoir faire*, an insight and a motive, that no man ever had before or since.

(d) One feature more of His life on earth; let us glance at His marvellous works. If these stood by themselves apart from the remarkable Character we have been considering, if they were recorded of some more ordinary individual in history, the modern type of mind would reject them as legendary. But if the other evidence goes to show that He was more than a man, that there was Deity in that life as well as humanity, it is all but certain that His power *must* have flashed out occasionally—if God came to earth, something unusual *must* have happened. The miracles, apart from the life and the claim to Deity, are incredible; the claim, if nothing out of the ordinary had happened, would have been equally incredible. And how unlike they are to the legends of the mediæval saints, or to the apocryphal stories about Christ Himself! Never selfish, never puerile, never vindictive, never mere marvels, they are all of a piece with the character of Him Who went about doing good. Only one (the fish with a coin in its mouth) was to get Himself and a follower out of a difficulty; only one was a miracle of judgment, and the subject was a fruit-tree. Yet occasionally His Deity shone, for a few minutes, as it were through the garment of His Humanity, and John Baptist saw a dove descend on Him from heaven (perhaps, as Justin Martyr tells us, the waters of Jordan were illuminated by an unearthly light—so also two manuscripts of the Old Latin, and Tatian's Diatessaron); three times a Voice spoke from heaven saying "This is My beloved Son, hear Him," and once His garments became glistening, exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth can white them, and His face did shine as the sun. It is a remarkable

fact that the early opponents of Christianity seem never to have attempted to deny the miracles. The Jews attributed them to demon-possession ; Celsus,¹ the principal philosopher-critic in the second century, to sorcery. The Apology of Quadratus² presented to the emperor Hadrian in A.D. 125, and Justin Martyr³ writing about A.D. 150, both refer to them as indisputable. Justin says they are described in the official annals of Pilate's procuratorship.⁴

But—some one will say—may not all this elevation of character, this high teaching, this practical wisdom, these miracle-stories, be due to His biographers rather than to the sober facts of history? Was He not a very ordinary individual really ; in fact, did He ever exist at all? This objection is only made by slipshod thinkers. The important, thoughtful intellectual unbelievers have for the most part avoided this trap, at any rate since the evidence for the early date of the Synoptic Gospels came to light. As John Stuart Mill, who was emphatically *not* a Christian, pointed out, this is to make four difficulties instead of one. Who was Matthew, anyway, that he should have conceived of such a hero for his romance? The creator of such a character is the literary genius of all time. Shakespeare, Thackeray, Dickens, Kingsley, the modern novelists, with all the advantages they enjoy in the literary models that have been available for their study, never delineated such a hero as this. Is it likely that a Jewish tax-gatherer, who had sold his services to his country's oppressor, member of a scarcely respectable class, and in a day when his nation showed all the signs of dotage political, moral, religious and intellectual, hidebound with pettifogging traditional rules—is it likely that this obscure creature who wrote nothing else should be the master-novelist, the writer, as Renan the French sceptic declared, of the most wonderful book that was ever written? Well, grant it ; then what about Mark, and Luke, and above all, John? No one seriously believes nowadays that these three copied all their material from Matthew, or he from them. So they must be geniuses, too ; and they all take the same subject! Then there must be a common original, written by—whom? Amidst all the literary activity of the time—Peter, Paul, James, Jude, Josephus, the Roman historians—

¹ *Origen cont. Celsus*, i. 38 ; ii. 48.

² Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, iv. 3.

³ Justin Martyr, *Dial.*, 69 ; *Apol.*, i. 30.

⁴ Just., *Apol.*, i. 48, 35.

no one has hinted at the Unknown's existence ! Somewhere between A.D. 30 or 32, when Christ is said to have died, and A.D. 75, when three gospels must have been written, he has to be crowded in. But even this breaks down ; if so, he must have been a contemporary of Paul, and already in A.D. 53 or thereabouts Paul was writing about Jesus to the Thessalonians. The only possible original, now that the theory of a second-century origin for the gospels has had to be abandoned,¹ is Jesus Christ Himself.

But, perhaps fortunately, we are not left without information as to what the early Christians would have made of His story, if they had drawn on their imagination instead of sticking to facts. A whole crowd of second-, third- and fourth-century "gospels" have come down to us, such as the Protevangelium or gospel of James, which is probably late second century ; the gospels of Thomas (third century), of Nicodemus (? fourth), of Peter (second), and the Arabic gospel of the Infancy. In these precious productions we are told that Salome's hand was withered because she would not believe in the Virgin Birth, that the ox and the ass kneeled to the Child in the manger, lions and leopards adored Him on the way to Egypt, roses blossomed where He trod ; all the idols in Egypt fell from their pedestals when He entered the country ; in His village home in Nazareth He struck dead a boy who jostled Him in the street, turned into living sparrows twelve clay models of birds, criticized one of His schoolmasters and killed another, terrified and angered the whole village, and issued from the grave in a form that towered to the skies. Yet these legend-mongers appear to be quite sincere Christians, and artists in their way ; some of their descriptions are really very fine. They do at least serve to show what the four gospels would have been like if they had been fiction instead of fact.

How does the reader account for this wonderful and impressive Character ? Is He man, or is He God ? At any rate let us write down Fact One, a Man Who transcends all other men, and stands in a class by Himself. Presently, we must bring our facts together, and explain them.

(II) HIS DEATH. The historical fact of Christ's death by crucifixion cannot fairly be questioned. It is vouched for not only by the Gospels, by Peter and Paul, and the early Christian writers, but by unexpurgated editions of the Talmud, the

¹ See Chapter VI.

Roman historian Tacitus (who was consul in A.D. 97), the anti-Christian philosopher Celsus, and others. Martyrs for an ideal have been plentiful in every period of the world's history. But there is a great deal of important evidence that He did not die the death of an ordinary martyr. There is so much, in fact, that we shall only quote a small part of it.

John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." To his Jewish audience, steeped in the traditions of the levitical sacrifices, the mention of the Lamb could only mean that His death was to be an atonement.¹ Peter wrote, "Who bore our sins in His own body on the tree." And Paul, "Who loved me, and gave Himself for me"; again, "Christ died for our sins"; again, "Whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, by His blood." John wrote, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Christ Himself taught this plainly. "The Son of Man came to give His life a ransom for (Gr. instead of) many" (Matt. xx. 28). When He instituted the last Supper, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins." Again, "I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself" (John x. 17, 18).

The truth is borne out, not only by words, but also by events. It is related that He set His face as a flint to go to Jerusalem. When He was arrested, all His assailants fell backwards; He could have escaped if He wished, but He did not. The agony in the garden is inexplicable, in One so brave, if it were a mere shrinking from death; scores of His martyrs have gone to as cruel a fate with a bright and cheerful countenance. But we can begin to understand it, if there was a moral and spiritual agony besides; if He was made to be sin for us, Who knew no sin. Why did He cry, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani—My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" if it were not that on the cross His Father's face was eclipsed for the first time in His life? If He died to be the supreme example of self-sacrifice, or to show that come what may a man may trust in God even in the uttermost distress—if that were all, then His test would have failed at the crucial moment. There is only one sound explanation of that eclipse—He hung there accursed as the Sin-bearer.

The fact of the Atonement has been denied, of course; denied on the ground of common morality, by those who have

¹ The reference is perhaps to Isaiah liii. (Alford).

been misled by inadequate illustrations. If in an assize court a man is found guilty of murdering his neighbour and is condemned to death, but his wife comes forward and begs to be allowed to die in his stead, the judge will refuse her appeal and public opinion will support him in disallowing a vicarious sacrifice of that sort. Less still will he allow her to die instead of a whole gaol-delivery of condemned murderers. But this is an absolute travesty of the actual facts of the case before us. There are four persons concerned, the judge, the injured party, the substitute and the guilty man. In our illustration all four are separate, and substitution is impossible.

Just here lies an old, tragic problem. There is an interesting example of it in the Bible. Absalom, under circumstances of great provocation, had murdered his brother Amnon, and fled the country. King David loved his son and wanted to forgive him, but realized that he was the mainstay of law and justice in the realm, and it would sap the foundations of both if he overlooked such a crime. Eventually his resolution weakened, and he allowed his son to return, and "the king kissed Absalom." A few years later, the ungrateful culprit, whose moral code had not been improved by his father's vacillation, was in full rebellion; David had to flee, and civil war broke out with heavy loss of life. Yet we can pity David, and it is easier to criticize than to suggest what he ought to have done. As the wise Greek said, "God may be able to forgive sin, but I do not know how." When man has sinned and deserved punishment, but a holy God loves him, it is a problem fit for God, how to deal with the situation.

There is a story, whether fact or fiction we cannot say, which gives a hint as to the solution. It is related that in a certain country it was found that state secrets were being betrayed to the national enemy, and the king decreed that anyone found guilty should receive one hundred lashes. The next culprit to be discovered was his own mother. He loved her, but the facts were certain, and he had to pronounce judgment. Then he descended from the throne, bared his back before the public executioner, and bore the full penalty himself. This is an illustration of a different character altogether, because the substitute was at once the judge, the injured party, and the final law-giver and law-upholder in the country. So a vicarious sacrifice becomes possible without offending the moral sense.

The modern mind hates the thought of being indebted to another's suffering, but this very indebtedness is strangely

bound up with the constitution of things, and we have to acknowledge it whether we like it or not. On the piers of the suspension bridge that spans the Clifton gorge is the motto "Vix via suspensa fit,"¹ and though it is a great public convenience now, lives were lost in making it.

Modern medicine and surgery save many lives and much suffering to-day, but they have had to learn by the method of trial and error, and success has been dearly purchased; it has cost the lives of countless animals and thousands of human beings, on whom unsuccessful methods of treatment were tried. England is free and at peace to-day, but she owes it to those who lie beneath the little wooden crosses all over the battle-fields of Flanders and the Somme. No child comes into the world without costing a mother something, and the debt only accumulates year by year afterwards.²

What is involved in all this? Not only atonement for a world's sins, but—Who could have purchased that atonement? Not a mere man. He could only die for one, not for many. He must have no sins of his own, or he could not die for anyone else. And it would not be moral, unless he were the Judge, the Law-maker and the Law-upholder of the universe, and the Injured Party, against whom man had sinned. Yet that is what Jesus claimed—to die as a ransom for many. Incessantly He referred to His death. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me . . . signifying what death He should die." To Him, it was His death, not His life, not His teaching, that was His master-stroke. No human reformer thinks like this; for him death ends all, even if by it he hopes to influence public opinion. But Christ never refers to the effect of His death on public opinion; He died because an atoning death was the most necessary service He could render the world. The Apostles and Paul, too, stake everything on Christ's death, not on His life, and they must have learnt this from Himself. Therefore, unless He knew that He was more than a man, His whole theory of His lifework was rotten at the core.

When first brought face to face with this claim, the intellect refuses to receive it. If Jesus was God, and He was put to death, why, something stupendous must surely happen; the universe would—explode. We are told that some things *did*

¹ "With difficulty the suspended way was made."

² Needless to say, there is no attempt here to present a full or adequate theory of the Atonement. Several important aspects of it are not even mentioned, e.g. Christ as the second Adam (Rom. v.).

happen. The earth quaked; the sun ceased to shine for three midday hours. But no one died. He died, to bring life, not death, and prayed for His murderers.

Let us write down this as Fact Two—Christ staked everything, life itself, on the theory, nay, the certainty, that being God, He could die for the sins of the world. If in this He was mistaken, His life is an enigma indeed.

BOOKS.

CARNEGIE SIMPSON. *The Fact of Christ* (Hodder and Stoughton).
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CHAPTER V

The Fact of Christ—the only Solution

WE have tried to visualize two of the great outstanding facts that go to make up the whole of our conception of Christ, but several more remain to be fitted into place.

PROPHECIES, PICTURES AND PREMONITIONS. In one respect the national aspirations of the Jewish people, from whom Christ sprang, were, and to some extent are, totally exceptional. They did not look forward, as Rome or Greece did, or mediæval or modern England or France, or any other representative nation, only to a period of world dominion, or of social and industrial prosperity. Yet they did not concern themselves merely with the present. We find in Israel quite another aspiration, the longing for a personal Messiah, a divine superman, who should come to right the wrongs of the nation. This belief persisted for centuries. It originated in the messages of the prophets, and they always ascribed those messages to a "Thus saith the Lord." It was much more than a vague general expectation. The prophets occasionally furnished remarkably precise details, and to some extent these details appeared to be self-contradictory. Some prophecies spoke of a triumphant Messiah (Psa. ii., lxxii.; Isa. lx. 6, 7; xxxii.-xxxv.), and nearly all the prophetic books close with a picture of national restoration that implies a divine ruler. But other passages tell of a coming superman, the Servant of Jehovah, who should be a sufferer (Isa. liii., Zech. xii. 10 and xiii. 7). The early Jewish rabbis, such as Abenezra (born A.D. 1088, died 1176), Abarbanel (1437-1508), and Moses Alshech (sixteenth century), accepted the view that there were to be two Messiahs, the Messiah ben David who should reign in triumph, and the Messiah ben Joseph (who does not exist in Scripture) who should suffer, and there is evidence that this was the accepted rabbinical explanation as far back as the fourth century A.D. Later rabbis, finding the theory inconvenient in arguing

with Christians, maintained that the passages that speak of a Sufferer do not relate to the Messiah at all. There is so much difficulty in finding what else they *can* refer to, and so much correspondence between the prophecy and the events in Christ's life, that it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that both Isaiah and Zechariah prophesied of Him, unless one starts with the fixed idea that prophecy is incredible.

Reading the Isaiah prophecy (Isa. lii. 13–liii.) we have the following points of agreement—

lii. 14—His face was disfigured by the crown of thorns, and his body by the scourging.

liii. 1.—Believers always have been, and always will be, in a minority.

liii. 2—He came from despised Nazareth—"Can any good come out of Nazareth?"—a green shoot out of a very dry ground. His personal appearance was not overwhelming.

Verse 3—He was despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows.

Verse 4—The Christian doctrine of His vicarious sufferings. The literal translation is "He was pierced for our transgressions," by the spear and the nails.

Verse 6—The Christian doctrine that "All have sinned."

Verse 7—Repeatedly, He was silent before His judges.

Verse 8 (R.V.)—It was by a judicial process, not by mob violence, that He was put to death; and few of His day and generation understood or cared for the real significance of it.

Verse 9—The Roman soldiers would have buried Him with the two robbers in some dishonourable grave, but a rich member of the Sanhedrin gave Him his own tomb. He was guiltless of the charges laid against Him.

Verse 10—His death was ordained of God. His days were prolonged by resurrection, and thereby He begat spiritual children ("seed" cannot mean literal sons, because it was His *death* that was to produce them).

Verses 11, 12—His atoning death has not been in vain; He has seen an enormous response in the Christian converts of all generations since. He died a shameful death with a criminal on each side of Him; and He prayed even for His murderers.

The agreement, both with the history of the crucifixion, and also with the outstanding facts of Christian doctrine (Christ's sinlessness as "My righteous servant," His voluntary and atoning death, and man's universal sin), is far too striking to be accidental, yet the events are not of such a nature that

either Christ or His disciples could have play-acted the scene to make it fit the prophecy.

Now compare this extraordinary agreement with the lame exposition of the modern rabbis, followed by certain rationalizing critics who do not believe in prophecy. The explanation given is that it refers to the sufferings of the righteous part of the Jewish nation. But in Isaiah xlix. 6—"It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel"—the Servant is distinguished from the nation. Again, in what respect were the sufferings of the nation vicarious? In what sense was he wounded for our transgressions, if the nation is the sufferer? "For the transgression of my people was he stricken"—here the sufferer was distinguished from the nation. When we bear in mind that the prophecy was undoubtedly written hundreds of years before Christ came, the conclusion seems inevitable that here we have a supernatural word of God through Isaiah pointing on to Christ.

However, if this seems insufficient, let us lay four Zechariah prophecies alongside of it. Two of these seem direct and unmistakable and incapable of any other straightforward interpretation; the other two are striking, but it could scarcely be proved from the context that they are *bound* to refer to the Messiah. Glancing at these first, in Zechariah ix. 9, we read, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee; He is just and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass." And in Zechariah xi. 12, "So they weighed for my hire thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter, the goodly price that I was priced at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them unto the potter, in the house of the Lord." The fulfilment of both of these may be read in St. Matthew's gospel, chapters xxi. and xxvii. Less open to criticism are the other two prophecies. "They shall look unto Me Whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son" (Zech. xii. 10) is to be taken along with "Awake, O sword, against My shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts; smite the shepherd" (Zech. xiii. 7). In these verses we find that the shepherd, who was priced at thirty pieces of silver, was Jehovah's Fellow or equal, and was smitten; that the Lord was pierced in the person of Him for Whom they long afterwards came to mourn.

The modern rabbis mistranslate the passage by reading either "they whom the nations are piercing" (so the Jewish Family Bible) or "because of him whom they are piercing" (first suggested by Rashi, born 1040, died 1105, but the rendering is "contrary to grammar and to the natural sense.")¹

The older rabbis, up to and including Abenezra, Abarbanel and Moses Alshech, applied the passage, correctly translated, to the hypothetical Messiah ben Joseph. The rabbis are in equally great difficulties in trying to explain away the Smitten Shepherd of Zechariah xiii. Abenezra thinks it means Gentile Kings, Isaak of Troki invokes the "King of Israel called also the King of Turkey"; Abarbanel explains the shepherd as Mohammed, and the "Man My Fellow" as Jesus Christ spoken of in irony. These extraordinary guesses show how clear and conclusive the passages really are.

But this is not all. Prophecy further speaks of the Messiah being born as a child, and yet being the Mighty God (Isa. ix. 6) : it relates that He will arise out of Bethlehem (Micah v. 2), and even the time of His death is accurately foretold. "From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself" (Dan. ix. 25, 26). The word translated "weeks" simply means "sevens," and there is no reasonable doubt that it refers to sevens of years. Nehemiah ii. 1-8 shows that the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem was given in Nisan (March) of the twentieth year of Artaxerxes. Artaxerxes ascended the throne of Persia in 464 or 465 B.C. (so Ewald, Sayce and the general consensus of historians). Therefore the beginning of the prophetic period is 445 B.C. Some calculations verified by Sir George Airy,² the late Astronomer Royal, fix the date at March 14, 445.

Now $69 \times 7 = 483$, and it looks at first sight as if the terminal date should be A.D. 39, which is too late. But the Greek year was 365 days, whereas there is evidence from several sources that the prophetic year is the ancient luni-solar year of 360 days (cf. Rev. xii. 14, "a time, times, and half a time" = $3\frac{1}{2}$ years; Rev. xiii. 5, "forty-two months"; Rev. xii. 6, "1,260 days"). Now $5 \times 483 = 2,415$ days = 6.6 years, bringing the time down to A.D. 32, the probable date of our Lord's

¹ Baron, *Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah*, p. 439.

² Quoted by Sir Robert Anderson : *Daniel in the Critic's Den*, p. 74.

crucifixion (the ministry began in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, and probably lasted $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, i.e. A.D. 29 to 32). It is admitted that authorities differ somewhat as to exact dates, but it is perfectly evident that the prophetic period cannot be far out, and some careful calculations work it out to the very day. It may be objected that there has been no historic fulfilment of the events foretold of the seventieth "week" in the last two verses of Daniel ix., but this is a constant phenomenon both in the Old Testament prophets and in the Revelation, where the same period, or part of it, is extensively referred to, and the conclusion surely is that this is yet future (*see* p. 147).

But there is something more, besides direct prophecies. The Old Testament contains a number of *pictures*, very complicated and apparently meaning little in themselves, that foreshadow in an extraordinary way the historical facts of Christ's death. Take the Passover ceremony, for instance. It seems incredible that a nation, hastening to escape from slavery, going out in the night with a hostile army to follow them, should impede their departure by a ritual of this sort, unless there was some deep meaning in it. It would be difficult or impossible to find a historical parallel. Yet here we read of a male lamb without blemish kept from the tenth to the fourteenth day of the month—how we are reminded of Christ's youth, spotless character and $3\frac{1}{2}$ years of public ministry!—then killed and its blood sprinkled, but no bone broken, and nothing left till the morning. From St. John's gospel it seems clear that Christ died on the cross just at the time when the Passover lamb was being killed in the Temple, that no bone of Him was broken because He died before the soldiers came to break His legs, and that the body was buried before nightfall. The lamb died instead of the firstborn; when John the Baptist saw Christ at the beginning of His public appearing he exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

It would be tedious, perhaps, to pursue the subject further, but a long list might be made of *premonitions*, that is to say, words or incidents occurring in the Old Testament that have a double reference, the one to the circumstances of some contemporary individual, and the other to the Lord Jesus Christ.¹ Though no one of these might be very conclusive in itself, their cumulative value is very great.

¹ *See*, for instance, Gen. iii. 15; Deut. xviii. 15; Psalms xxii. ; xvi. ; cx. ; Isaiah vii. 14 ; l. 6 ; lxi. 1 ; Jonah i. 17 ; Mal. iii. 1. Some of these are prophecies, not premonitions.

Once more, what are we to make of all these remarkable predictions? It seems impossible to escape from two conclusions, first, that the prophets had an authentic message from God about the Coming One, and secondly, that this Messiah was to be much more than a mere man. It is very remarkable to notice how few of the events in Christ's history can be described as play-acting, with the stage arranged by Himself to fit the prophecies. His birth, its date and place and the details of His death were not such as a man could arrange for himself. When a prince of the royal blood visits this country, his programme is announced beforehand in all the papers; so the Old Testament announces the programme of the Son of God. Let us call this Fact Three.

THE EVIDENCE FOR THE RESURRECTION. If we except certain Bible stories, there is no shadow of proof that anybody ever rose from the dead. *If* Christ rose, some unique cause will have to be found for it. It is stupid, when we are confessedly dealing with an alleged masterpiece of proof given by God to man just for once in the world's history, to start with the presumption that no amount of evidence can possibly prove that the resurrection took place, but it is frankly admitted that we shall need something pretty conclusive before we can accept such a strange happening. What then are the facts? Let it be remarked again that here we assume that the four gospels were written by the men whose names they bear, and that they are not irresponsible romances.

The principal facts, then, are these; that Christ was crucified, and there is real evidence that He did actually die and was buried; that on the third day the grave—a cave hewn in the rock with a circular stone rolled in front of it—was found empty, although it had been kept by an armed guard; that the Jewish authorities were never able to produce the body, although it would have been greatly to their interest to do so; that the disciples were taken almost entirely by surprise, but they and others saw Him, both in public and in private for a period of forty days, and that then the appearances ceased. That *something* stupendous happened is proved, first, by the radical change in the disciples' demeanour after these events, and secondly, by the fact that the very days of the week were altered, and the Jewish Sabbath was abandoned in favour of the Christian first day of the week, the Lord's Day. Further, it is incredible that Saul of Tarsus could have been converted (as well as a great company of the priests) and have written

so convincingly about the resurrection, if the facts had not been pretty generally admitted in Jerusalem.

Some of these facts may be expanded a little. It will scarcely be denied that Christ really died. It is only in the imagination of scaremongers, novelists and crazy painters that people get buried alive, if sensible people take real care to verify the fact of death. Even if that did happen it is absolutely impossible that a patient so reduced should a day or later be sufficiently revived to get free from wrappings loaded with a hundred pounds of spices, roll away the stone from the tomb, get about all over the town, and walk eight miles and back, with pierced feet. The Roman soldiers, the priests and His friends who buried Him would all look carefully to make certain that He was dead. The spear-wound in His side was intended to verify the fact. (Whatever the true explanation may be, we do not accept the theory advanced by some old-fashioned physicians that the water and blood proved that He died of a ruptured heart. It is a subject on which one does not care to speculate.)

If the resurrection was no more than a revival after being buried alive, both Christ and His disciples would have been parties to a deception, and men do not stake their all for something they do not believe in. The grave was found empty on the Sunday morning, but the graveclothes were there; the wording of the account in the fourth gospel suggests that they were still in position and undisturbed, as though the body had withdrawn from them but had not unravelled them. The guard had fled; angels took their place; and the Jewish authorities could not produce the body. All the evangelists, and Paul, testify to these facts. The accounts were written by men too closely connected with the events to allow legend opportunity to grow.

The very differences and apparent discrepancies in the narratives prove their independence, but they all agree on the main facts—the death—the burial—the empty tomb—the appearance to Mary, then to Cleopas, then to Peter, then to the eleven disciples. Strauss, Keim and A. Meyer regard the empty tomb as legendary, but Keim himself admits that “a hundred voices are raised in protest, and many critics not only of the Right, but even of the Left, are able to regard it (the empty grave) as certain and incontrovertible.”¹

That none of the disciples had a hand in removing the body

¹ Keim, *Jesus of Nazara*, E.T. vi. 297–8.

is certain, because of the extraordinary change in their demeanour after the event, and it could not have been done by one or two, with a Roman guard on the spot. Up till now the disciples had been weak, dependent and timid; suddenly they are bold as lions, willing to put up with any hardship, torture or death, and intent on founding a new society. A few years later, when the gospels are written, and Paul is converted, and writing to the Corinthians, that society has advanced by leaps and bounds. Every such society knows what are the historical facts that gave it birth; there cannot be a mistake on the main issue. Men do not die for what they know to be a lie.

But they saw Him, talked with Him, touched Him, watched Him eat; sometimes in ones and twos, indoors, outdoors; sometimes ten or a dozen at a time, sometimes on the beach of Gennesaret, sometimes on a mountain where He appeared to five hundred at once. A few could not trust the evidence of their senses, but the majority were still on earth and ready to be appealed to when the written accounts were appearing. The sensation created was so great that these people, ardent Jews most of them, actually altered the days of the week, and kept sacred the first instead of the seventh. The French Revolution tried to do something of the sort, but its ten-day week only survived about twelve years; what the Revolution could not accomplish, the Resurrection did. Then, after forty days, they saw Him ascend to heaven, and the appearances finally ceased.

Many of these appearances are related by several independent witnesses. They are free from grotesque incidents. Christ does not come before His enemies and strike them with terror. Legend and lie they cannot be; "it is as incredible that the Mother of all the Churches—the undoubted seat of Apostolic residence and activity for many years—should have been unaware of, or have forgotten, the circumstances of its own origin, as that, say, Germany should forget its Reformation by Luther, or America its declaration of independence."¹

Then, were the appearances merely visions? Or are the modern spiritualists right in concluding that the rappings, etc., of a séance will explain all that the disciples heard and saw?

Even such intangible phenomena as visions have laws, well known to students of modern psychological medicine, and unless the appearances after the Resurrection correspond to

¹ Orr: *The Resurrection of Jesus*, p. 207.

these laws, the "explanation" is a meaningless phrase. Visions are intensely individualistic; they are only seen at all by a small minority of mankind with a special nervous temperament, and then only under stress of special circumstances, (except in the insane); every person's visions are peculiar to himself or herself alone, and evolved out of the conceptions of their own subconscious minds. A vision may be thought to speak, but rarely if ever is a conversation carried on. It is intangible, and does not alter material things. They are likely to recur, at very irregular intervals, for years, in a susceptible individual.

But the Resurrection appearances break every known law of visions. All kinds of people, with every variety of temperament—not only a Mary Magdalene, but an unemotional tax-gatherer like Matthew, and a doubting Thomas, and an unbelieving James (the Lord's brother)—saw the same appearance; many persons saw them at the same time, even in the open air. There were conversations. They touched Him, they saw Him eat; He prepared a fire and food for them to make a breakfast from. They did not expect to see Him, and several of them did not at first recognize Him when they *did* see Him. The "visions" began within a few hours of the rolling back of the stone from the tomb, before legend or imagination had had a chance to develop, and after forty days they ceased for ever. "No single example can be produced of belief in the resurrection of an historical personage, such as Jesus was: none at least on which anything was ever founded. What is found is an unwillingness to believe, or to admit, in certain cases, for a time, that the hero is really dead. The Christian Resurrection is thus a fact without historical analogy."¹

If the disciples, moreover, had merely seen visions, what gave rise to their belief in a *bodily* resurrection? And finally, even if the Vision Theory be accepted, it breaks on one immovable fact—the tomb was empty, and the body was gone.

Modern spiritualists tell us that the appearances were real, and that they can be reproduced to-day, although they will admit that it is very unusual for visitors to a modern séance to see and converse with the departed. There are, however, photographs in existence of Sir William Crooks in company with such an "apparition." Whatever we may think of spiritism in general, there is a strong suspicion of fraud about these particular manifestations. The medium with whom

¹ Orr, loc. cit., p. 224.

Sir William Crooks worked was afterwards proved to use imposture at times. But even if the genuineness of this phenomenon is admitted, the analogy completely breaks down. A séance requires earnest seekers after the supernatural, a set stage and a medium. The appearances during these forty days had no set stage, and came unsought; there was no medium, and the figure seen was not that of a stranger, but one whose every gesture and tone of voice was familiar. We repeat once more: this is not lying, and it is not legend, because it is all related by contemporary witnesses—Matthew, Peter and John—who staked their lives and reputations to spread what was to them the dearest fact in their experience.

There is in the narrative of the forty days none of that clumsy handling of the supernatural which even capable *littérateurs* are apt to be guilty of. The Lord's conversation is in keeping with His utterances before His Passion; His body is neither purely natural nor purely spiritual. It bore the marks of His putting to death; it could be touched and felt; He prepared food and partook of food. On the other hand, He was not always recognized, He appeared and disappeared, He passed closed doors, and finally ascended in visible form from earth to heaven.

Of course, the most has been made by the critics of the discrepancies, real or fancied, in the order of events and the like, on the first Easter Day. It will not be necessary here to go through these one by one. As Professor Orr says, most of the objections are strongly reminiscent of the methods of a pettifogging attorney with a bad case, bent on tripping up the witnesses at all costs and by any means, and creating contradictions where a fuller narrative would show that there were none. Orr and many others have shown that the difficulties can be resolved into a harmonious narrative.

Thus we may write down Fact Four, that Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM. Four facts claim our attention.

1. Jesus Christ lived an unique and transcendent life.
2. There is evidence that His death was meant to be an atonement for the sins of the world.
3. His supernatural nature and His death had been long foretold in prophecy, picture and premonition.
4. He rose from the dead.

Perhaps the evidence for some one of these, standing alone, may not seem conclusive to the reader, but the four standing

together surely constitute a most impressive testimony, that here we have a Man Who was far more than a man.

Something more is involved here than acknowledging that Jesus Christ on earth had all the qualities that we attribute to God. If He is God, then He lives to-day, has that power over the world which God has, claims to-day our allegiance, hears our prayers, can and will intervene to help us, is the verification for us of His promises to men of a future resurrection, and a judgment of right and wrong. This is much to ask. But will the four facts bear any other explanation? We think not. His life, work and character were superhuman and Godlike. Only if He were God could He justly offer an atonement. Prediction viewed Him as God; without divine revelation Daniel and Isaiah and the rest could not have foretold the facts as they did. If He raised Him from the dead, God thereby set His seal to all He claimed to be, "declared Him to be the Son of God with power, in that He raised Him from the dead."

Supposing He *were* God, would He not plainly have told us so? He did. That the fact has been doubted is due to a lack of historical sense. It is true that our Lord spoke for all time, but obviously His form of speech was in particular reference to the problems of His own generation. Every age has its own theological problems, and those of yesterday are not always those of to-day. Therefore the truth requires re-stating from time to time in terms of the new mental atmosphere. Even within the short period of history covered by the New Testament the battleground shifted more than once. When Paul wrote to the Galatians, the question of the age was the keeping of the Jewish law by Gentile Christians; when John wrote his letters thirty or forty years later, he had to insist on the proper humanity of our Lord, and on His death, because a school of heresy had arisen denying that the Messiah could die.

Now the problem of A.D. 30 was whether Jesus was the long-expected Jewish Messiah. The problem of our day is, whether He was, and is, God. And really, the problems are identical. That Jesus incessantly and repeatedly claimed to be the Messiah, the Son of God, is plain on nearly every page of His utterances, and the Pharisees and scribes perfectly understood that this was to claim Deity, because they recognized that the Messiah would be Divine.¹ A Jewish writing, the book of Enoch, composed a little before this very time, shows this clearly; the Messiah is regarded as God, and is spoken of as

¹Cf. Isaiah ix. 6, 7.

Son of Man and Son of God. Therefore the Jews took up stones to stone Him to death, exclaiming indignantly, "Thou, being a man, makest thyself God!" (John x. 33.) Let us see, then, what He *did* claim.

He stated definitely that He was the Messiah—to the woman of Samaria He says, "I that speak unto thee, am He."

He claimed *oneness* with God the Father—"I and the Father are one" (John x. 30). Some one said to Thomas Carlyle, "I could say, 'I and the Father are one.'" "Yes," was the reply, "but Jesus got the world to believe it." Again He said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John xiv. 9).

He claimed *equal honour* with the Father, and accepted it when offered—"That all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father" (John v. 23). When Thomas exclaimed "My Lord and my God," He calmly accepted it as His right. One has only to put these statements and acceptances into the mouth of a disciple, ancient or modern, to see how revolting they would be if spoken by any but Jesus.

He claimed *eternal being*. "Before Abraham was, I am" (John viii. 58). It may be objected that these, and many similar verses that might be quoted, are all from the fourth gospel, and that this is later and less reliable than the others. But we find the same claims in the synoptic gospels. In each of the first three gospels it is related that on a most solemn occasion, when He was on trial for His life, and put on oath, He declared that He was the Christ, the Son of God, and that He would one day come back in power and glory, and sit at the right hand of the power of God. It was, in fact, this declaration that cost Him His life. Matthew further relates that He linked Himself with the Father and the Holy Ghost in baptism (Matt. xxviii. 19); he also tells us that John the Baptist was sent to "prepare the way of the Lord" (Matt. iii. 3) and it is quite clear from the chapter in Isaiah from which the quotation is taken that the Coming One would be a Divine Being—"Behold, your God" (Isa. xl. 1-9). In the parable of the wicked husbandmen, related by three evangelists, Christ draws a striking distinction between the servants, the prophets and Himself the Son.

So, too, in His conversation with Peter about paying the didrachma—a religious tax—"then are the sons free." Jews had to pay, He claimed immunity.

The indirect evidence of His claims is no less striking. It is impossible that Peter, and John, and Paul and the writer

to the Hebrews can have been deceived in such a matter as this, and they one and all bear witness to His Deity.¹

Let us think this thing out to its logical conclusion: suppose Jesus made these claims, but was mistaken, was no more than any other man—what then? Even leaving the fourth gospel quite out of count, there are stupendous personal claims in almost every discourse recorded by the synoptists—claims to supersede the Law given at Sinai, to be able to forgive sins, to be the Christ of God, to be the future Judge of the world. If He was mistaken, what are we to think of Him? Suppose a modern demagogue made the claims, what should we think? Of his sincerity, or of his humility, or of his unselfishness? Or even of his sanity? If we deny the Deity, we are left face to face with a very serious alternative.

If Jesus Christ was not Divine, how are we to account for the extraordinary influence he has wielded over men ever since? Here let us put in the testimony, not of a theologian nor of an arm-chair professor, but of one who rose to the very summit of fame just by his knowledge of men and things—Napoleon Bonaparte. In his exile at St. Helena, he said one day to Count Montholon, "Can you tell me who Jesus Christ was?" The answer was no. "Well, then," said the emperor, "I will tell you. Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne and I myself have founded great empires; but upon what did these creations of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded His empire upon love, and to this very day millions would die for Him. . . . I think I understand something of human nature; and I tell you, all these were men, and I am a man: none else is like Him; Jesus Christ was more than man. . . . I have inspired multitudes with such an enthusiastic devotion that they would have died for me . . . but to do this it was necessary that I should be visibly present with the electric influence of my looks, of my words, of my voice. . . . Christ alone has succeeded in so raising the mind of man towards the Unseen that it becomes insensible to the barriers of time and space. . . . All who sincerely believe in Him experience that remarkable supernatural love towards Him. This phenomenon is unaccountable; it is altogether beyond the scope of man's creative powers. Time, the great destroyer, is powerless to extinguish this sacred flame; time

¹ 2 Peter i. 1 (R.V.); John i. 1; xii. 41 with Isa. vi.; Acts xx. 28 (R.V.); Coloss. ii. 9; Phil. ii. 6; Heb. i. 8; and of course many passages besides.

can neither exhaust its strength nor put a limit to its range. This is what strikes me most ; I have often thought of it. This it is which proves to me quite convincingly the Divinity of Jesus Christ.”¹

THE INCARNATION.—One solution only, then, will explain our four great facts—that Jesus is the Son of God. It is a canon of science that when the correct explanation of certain outstanding phenomena is forthcoming, it will set other phenomena in their places, and so completely verify itself. We have found that the Deity of Christ satisfies our main facts, and also accords with the account He gave of Himself, and the place that He occupied in the estimation of His disciples. One other fact now finally falls into line ; that is the strange and otherwise all but incredible story of His birth. Without this story, it would be difficult indeed to understand how the divine and the human could possibly be united in one personality ; granted the Deity, then the account of His birth, “conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary,” exactly meets the difficulty. “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee,” said the angel to Mary, “and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee ; wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God.” And it is one of the synoptists, not John, who writes thus.

Our information is derived from two evangelists, whose accounts, though perfectly compatible, are evidently totally independent. It seems all but certain that Matthew preserves the Joseph version, perhaps through James the Lord’s brother—what Joseph thought and dreamed and did is the main theme, and the genealogy is probably Joseph’s own. Luke certainly gives Mary’s account ; it is written entirely from the woman’s point of view, and the genealogy is probably hers, her husband’s name being inserted instead of her own, after the Jewish custom, as the “son” of Heli. Though so different, the accounts agree on all the salient points ; Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth, but the child was born in Bethlehem ; they were betrothed but not living in the married state ; the birth was in humble circumstances ; and the childhood was spent at Nazareth.

A difficulty has been found, because Mark, John and Paul do not refer to the Virgin Birth. This is nothing to the point. Mark’s gospel contains almost nothing outside the common more or less standardized account of the Lord’s ministry and death and resurrection which constituted the substance of

¹Quoted from Liddon’s *Bampton Lectures*, 1866.

the Apostles' teaching for new converts. He must have known *something* of the Lord's birth and childhood, and yet he omits all reference to it. It may not have formed part of the regular instruction, which in view of the delicacy of the subject-matter is not surprising. John's gospel, on the other hand, relates almost nothing that the three synoptics include, perhaps because he knew that his readers were already acquainted with much of the story. Paul refers incessantly to the Lord's death and resurrection, but seldom to His life, words or ministry, simply because they were not germane to his purpose in writing. It is not true to say that he ignores the Virgin Birth, for to the Galatians he writes, "God sent forth His Son, born of a woman," and he probably refers to the same wonderful event in 1 Timothy ii. 15, "She shall be saved through the Child-bearing." So also in Romans i. 3 and 4, the human and the divine sonship are put side by side.

There was no doubt about the subject in the early Church. We know that it was definitely accepted by Ignatius (died A.D. 107), Aristides (A.D. 125), Justin Martyr and Tatian, both second-century writers.

REFERENCES

D. BARON—*The Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah* (Morgan & Scott).

We are glad to call attention to this reverent and scholarly book on a difficult subject. It has the advantage of including an adequate exposition of rabbinical as well as of Christian exegesis.

Sir R. ANDERSON—*Daniel in the Critics' Den* (Blackwood).

JAMES ORR—*The Resurrection of Jesus* (Hodder & Stoughton). Another scholarly work taking full count of the modern critical objections to the resurrection.

JAMES ORR—*The Virgin Birth of Christ*.

Sir WM. RAMSAY—*Was Christ Born at Bethlehem?*

Sir WM. RAMSAY—*Bearing of Recent Discovery on the New Testament*.

These two books contain an interesting research into the historicity of the census in the days of Quirinius. Until recently the critics have refused all credence to Luke as a historian, because the only census known of was when Quirinius was governor of Syria in A.D. 6 and 7. An inscription found in 1912 at Antioch proves that Quirinius was twice in authority in Syria, the first time being about 7 B.C. when he was commander of the forces, and so superior to Saturninus, the civil governor. This explains why Tertullian says that this census was taken during the rule of Saturninus, which appeared to contradict Luke. Papyri discovered in Egypt prove that a census was taken every fourteen years, so Luke specifies when it was *first* taken. The census papers for A.D. 20 and 48 have been found. A decree of the time of Trajan, A.D. 104, orders all persons to go to their own districts for the census in phraseology which implies that this was the custom, and even if Roman law did not insist on this, Herod would probably do so, to represent to his subjects, who were very suspicious of Rome, that it was a tribal enrolment.

CHAPTER VI

The Verification of the Documents

REPEATEDLY in the two preceding chapters we have taken for granted that the four accounts of the life and death of Jesus Christ which have come down to us—five, if we include Paul's epistles—were written by the men whose names they bear, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. It must now be set forth why this postulate must be accepted, for accepted it has come to be, after a long battle, by a majority even of hostile critics, except in the case of the fourth gospel, where scholarship is fairly evenly divided for and against.

It was contended by the Tübingen school of critics and their followers, including in this country the anonymous author of *Supernatural Religion* (Mr. Walter Cassells), that although four of Paul's epistles, and Revelation, were genuine, yet the four gospels were compiled from various "source" documents and legendary traditions, about a hundred years after the events they describe, and that the gospel "according to" Matthew or Mark means no more than that a line of tradition was traced back to these respectable names as originators of the nucleus of each narrative. But if so, why does the tracing back stop at such obscure personages as Mark and Luke? Early Church history as preserved in the Acts and Epistles knows scarcely anything of either of them, and the little that it tells of Mark is not over-flattering. Mark is reported by a universal and early tradition to have got his information from Peter, as Papias and others tell us; then why is Peter not the traditional source? And why is Luke's gospel not ascribed to Paul?

The work of many scholars, notably Brooke Foss Westcott, has conclusively proved that the three synoptic gospels were written by Matthew, Mark and Luke, that no other accounts of Christ's earthly ministry, except John's gospel, ever attained anything like the same degree of acceptance in the early Church,

and that these three gospels either incorporate earlier very fragmentary writings or, much more probably, reproduce with individual variations the common stock narrative, more or less stereotyped by constant repetition, wherewith the Apostles gave oral instruction concerning the life and death and teaching of their Lord to fresh converts and inquirers. The date of these gospels would be between A.D. 50 and 80.

The hypothesis that there may have been written documents which the three evangelists drew upon does not affect either their responsibility or their credibility as witnesses, nor is it inconsistent with the divine inspiration that is claimed for them, but the facts seem to fit better an oral source. That there *were* documents in existence giving accounts of Christ's life is proved by the statement of the third evangelist (Luke i. 1), but the reference seems to be rather disparaging, and it cannot be regarded as certain that the three evangelists made use of them. Great efforts have been made by the critics to show that Luke and Matthew copied from Mark, or from a hypothetical "Ur-Markus," but it has been maintained equally convincingly that Mark copied from them (Baur, Strauss, S. Davidson, Colin Campbell), or that Matthew was the main source (Zahn). These theories seem mutually destructive, and no one has ever been able to show *why* Luke, for instance, should have omitted much that his supposed "source" contained, and should have varied the wording here, and introduced new material there.

These difficulties disappear if the source was a more or less stock narrative repeated from memory. Everybody knows that when a story is related again and again, the phraseology tends to become stereotyped. The ancients had extraordinary powers of memory; the 1,058 poems of the Rig-Veda, and Homer's works, were preserved in this way. Some long prose stories invented by the Icelandic saga-tellers in the tenth century were not written down for two hundred years. The mediæval monks could repeat the whole Psalter. It was quite in accordance with the spirit of the first century to trust more to oral tradition than to writing; our Lord Himself wrote nothing, and it is a very small literature that has come down to us even from the second century.

That the material which the evangelists drew upon was oral, not written, seems almost proved by a mathematical analysis of the wording which they have in common. If three persons accompany a public speaker on a lecture tour, and afterwards repeat over and over again the adventures they

met with and the addresses and conversations they heard, their accounts being given sometimes in one another's hearing and then independently, there will be a good deal in common in the wording of their reports. Especially with regard to the conversations and addresses there will be close uniformity ; there will be more variation in the stories of the adventures, because it is possible to vary the wording so much even in telling the same story. Each of the narrators will be likely to preserve something that the others omit. Now on the other hand let us suppose that one of them writes a pamphlet and the others expand it into a couple of books ; there is no reason why there should be any difference in the amount of identical phraseology, between the records of the adventures and of the speeches, because both alike would be copied almost verbatim from the pamphlet. Here then we have a simple but conclusive test, whether the common source of the gospels was oral or written.

Now, if the total content of the several gospels be represented by 100, the following result is obtained :

	Peculiarities.	Coincidences.
St. Mark	7	93
St. Matthew	42	58
St. Luke.	59	41
St. John	92	8

Thus St. Mark contains very little that is not found in the others and St. John contains very little that is. If, further, we inquire how the verbal coincidences are distributed between the narrative and the recitative (i.e. addresses and conversations), we find :

	(a) Narrative.	(b) Recitative.	Coincidences in (a).	Coincidences in (b).
St. Matthew	25	75	2·08	14·56
St. Mark	50	50	3·33	13·33
St. Luke	34	66	0·50	9·50

That is to say, the first gospel is one-fourth narrative and three-fourths discourses ; in the latter there is more than twice as much verbal agreement with the other gospels as in the narrative parts. The second gospel is half of each, and the addresses and conversations contain four times as much coincidence as the narrative. In St. Luke the proportion is 9 to 1. In each case, therefore, the evangelists preserve an identical wording far more frequently when they are reporting sermons

and conversations than when they are describing what happened. This is strongly in favour of a memorized oral source, to which each added, under the Spirit's guidance, what he was able to derive from his own resources or from other eye-witnesses. That is to say, the gospels go back to the most reliable source there could possibly be. This view also explains why the order of events varies so in the gospels; if they are a collation of oral narratives, there would be no fixed order, such as one would find in a written document. St. Mark's gospel contains very little besides the more or less standardized oral tradition; St. Matthew and St. Luke add details of the nativity and of the forty days after the resurrection, and much besides. The material collected by St. Luke alone includes some of the most precious incidents we know. It is interesting to observe that when St. Matthew includes quotations from the Old Testament which form part of the matter common to the other evangelists, the wording mainly follows the Greek Septuagint; but in his own comments he makes original translations from the Hebrew text.¹ It may be objected that the narrative common to the first three gospels is too uniform to have had a verbal origin, but it must be remembered that the Apostles spent months or years in one another's company in Jerusalem and must have constantly heard one another speaking to converts about what they had seen and heard. Perhaps one or two—may we speculate Peter and Matthew?—furnished a considerable nucleus, which others added to. So the basal tradition took definite shape.

But the question of a written or oral source is of much less importance than the main inquiry—were the gospels written in the first century by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, or in the second century by no one knows whom? To answer this question we may follow either of two clues; we may endeavour to find quotations from the gospels in early Christian writers, or we may look for internal evidence and incidental marks of the author's hand within the gospels themselves.

The early Christians have left us but scanty remains of their writings, and what has come down to us is mostly letters, apologies addressed to heathen, and visions, which are but little likely to preserve quotations. When we reach the end of the second century, the literature is copious and of a more varied type, and it is quite certain that Irenæus of Gaul, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian of North Africa accepted

¹ Westcott, *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, 5th edit., pp. 191-195, 22

our four gospels as fully as they are accepted by the most orthodox of to-day, and confidently ascribed them to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. In this they merely voice the opinion of the whole Church of their day.

The most important of the early writings are the following :

(1) *The Didaché, or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, discovered in 1873, and published by the Archbishop of Nicomedia in 1883. This most interesting book was written towards the end of the first century, and contains a remarkable picture of the customs of the Church at that very early date.¹

(2) *Epistle of Clement of Rome*.—Clement was one of the earliest bishops of Rome, and wrote his epistle before A.D. 120, probably in the year 95. The letter is a brief statement of Christian doctrine and practical exhortations.

(3) *Letters of Ignatius*.—Ignatius was bishop of Antioch, and was dragged away to Rome to be martyred in the reign of Trajan. The dates given vary from A.D. 107 to 116. In spite of his age (he had been a bishop for forty years) he was cast to wild beasts in the amphitheatre on the last day of the games. He wrote his letters during the journey. They are largely a defence of episcopal authority.

(4) *Epistle of Polycarp*.—The special interest of Polycarp's testimony is that he lived to unite two ages. He sat at the feet of the Apostle John, and he was himself the teacher of Irenæus. He was bishop of Smyrna, and was martyred in A.D. 155. The story is a very touching one. "Reville Christ, and I will release thee," said the proconsul. The old man replied, "Six and eighty years have I served Him, and He has done me nothing but good, and how could I revile Him, my Lord and Saviour?" He was burnt at the stake, and his death hastened by a spear thrust.

(5) *Epistle of Barnabas*.—The date of this book is probably before A.D. 120, but there is no reason to believe that it was written by the Barnabas of the Acts; its fanciful interpretations of the Old Testament make that unlikely.

(6) *The Shepherd of Hermas*.—Of all the pictures used in our Lord's parables, none took a greater hold on the imagination of the early Christians than that of the shepherd and the sheep, and this book, written about the middle of the second century, is a collection of visions, commandments and parables embodying this conception of Christ's work.

Now, none of the above remains of early Christian literature

¹ It may be found translated and printed in full in Backhouse and Tylor's *Early Church History*.

give us a treatise on the books of the New Testament ; their quotations are incidental and fragmentary. But, according to a committee of the Oxford Historical Theology Society, reporting in 1905, the following New Testament writings are referred to by the Apostolic Fathers. The quotations are classified thus :

- A—quoted by name. C—quotation fairly probable.
 B—certainly quoted. D—doubtful.
- Didaché—B. Common synoptic tradition.
 C. ? Matthew.
 D. Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Hebrews, 1 Peter, Jude.
- Clement Rom.—A. Romans, 1 Corinthians, Hebrews.
 C. Acts, Titus.
 D. 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Timothy, 1 Peter, 1 John, Revelation.
- Ignatius—A. 1 Corinthians.
 B. Matthew, John, Ephesians.
 C. Romans, 2 Corinthians ?, Galatians, Philippians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus.
 D. Mark ?, Luke, Acts, Colossians, Thessalonians ?, Philemon ?, Hebrews, 1 Peter.
- Polycarp—A. 1 Corinthians, 1 Peter.
 B. Romans, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy.
 C. John, Acts, Hebrews, 1 John.
 D. Colossians.
- Barnabas—B. Romans.
 C. Ephesians, Hebrews.
 D. Matthew, Luke, John, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, 1 Peter, Revelation.
- Hermas—B. 1 Corinthians, Ephesians.
 C. Matthew, Mark, Hebrews, James.
 D. Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Thessalonians, 1 Peter.

Even this list is a very cautious one. For instance, Barnabas says, " Lest, as it is written, we be found many called, but few chosen "—this would appear to be a definite quotation from Matthew, but Barnabas' references to Matthew are classified as D. Clement of Rome says, " Remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, how He said, ' Woe to that

man; it were better for him that he had never been born, than that he should cast a stumblingblock before one of My elect. Yea, it were better that a millstone should be hung about (his neck), and that he should be sunk in the depths of the sea, than that he should cast a stumblingblock before one of My little ones ' ' (compare Luke xvii. 1, 2).

When we come to the middle of the second century, we have a more abundant and varied literature to draw upon, and the use of the gospels and epistles is therefore more evident. It will not be necessary to examine all the witnesses; we will confine ourselves to four, Papias, Justin Martyr, Tatian and the Muratorian canon.

Papias was bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, and somewhere about A.D. 140 to 150 (Westcott) wrote five books called *An Exposition of Oracles of the Lord*. These are lost, but Eusebius, the great Church historian, bishop of Cæsarea till about A.D. 340, has preserved for us some very valuable quotations. Papias had been a listener to the Elder John, perhaps not the same as the son of Zebedee, though we know nothing about this Elder except that Papias quotes him. "This also the Elder used to say. Mark, having become Peter's interpreter, wrote accurately all that he remembered, though he did not [record] in order that which was either said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed Him, but subsequently, as I said, [attached himself to] Peter, who used to frame his teaching to suit [the wants of his hearers], but not as making a connected narrative of the Lord's discourses. So Mark committed no error, as he wrote down some particulars just as he [Peter] called them to mind. For he took heed to one thing, to omit none of the facts that he heard, and to make no false statements in [his account of] them." Papias further states that "Matthew composed the oracles in the Hebrew language, and each reader interpreted them as he could."¹

Justin Martyr was a Greek living in Palestine, and from his youth up was a seeker after truth. First he applied to a Stoic, but soon found that he learned nothing of God from him, and his master told him that such knowledge was unnecessary. Next he went to a Peripatetic, "a shrewd man in his own opinion," who annoyed his pupil by displaying too keen an interest in the price of his lessons, so that their intercourse might prove profitable to both. Then he tried a Pythagorean, but he expected from his pupils a prior acquaintance with music, astronomy and geometry. Not possessing this Justin

¹ Eusebius: *Hist. Eccles.*, iii. 39. Westcott's translation.

threw in his lot with a Platonist, and thought that he was growing wiser every day, when he met by the seashore an aged man, who led him from Plato to the prophets and from metaphysics to faith. "Pray before all things," were the parting words of this new teacher, "that the gates of light may be opened to you, for [these truths] are not comprehensible by the eye or mind of man, unless God and His Christ give him understanding." Which prayer is greatly needed to-day. Justin became an active teacher and writer, and several large books of his, dating from A.D. 146 to 148 (Hort ; some put his death as late as 165) have been preserved to us. In these he refers repeatedly to the "Memoirs of the Apostles which are called gospels"; they contained a record of all things concerning Jesus Christ; they were universally admitted by all Christians and were read in all the churches, they were composed "by the apostles and those that followed them." This would briefly describe Matthew and John in the one category, and Mark and Luke in the other. His numerous quotations are undoubtedly taken from our four gospels, as Westcott has conclusively proved, though a few extraneous incidents are introduced (as that a fire lit up the waters of Jordan at the Baptism).

Tatian, a disciple of Justin's, composed a harmony of the four gospels in Syriac, called the Diatessaron (the name shows its fourfold origin), which was so popular in the Syrian churches that for a time it practically replaced the separate gospels, and they had to be reinstated by various bishops (Theodoret, Rabbula) early in the fifth century. This has come down to us in several forms (Arabic, Armenian, Latin), and proves to be a verbatim copy of our four gospels welded into one narrative. Thus here we have another testimony to the universal and early acceptance of the four canonical gospels.

A fragment has been discovered by Muratori, apparently a Latin translation by an ignorant scribe from a Greek original, written in the times of Pius, and probably not later than A.D. 170, though Zahn and Salmon put it after 200. It is incomplete at the beginning, and breaks in in the middle of a sentence apparently referring to Mark's gospel; then it gives a list of the received books of the New Testament, including Luke, John, Acts, thirteen epistles of Paul which are named, Jude, two epistles of John, and the Apocalypse of John. It omits both Peter's epistles, 1 John, James and Hebrews, but there are chasms in the text of the fragment, so that the omission proves nothing. Certain other books are mentioned as of

dubious authority (epistle to Laodiceans, Apocalypse of Peter, Shepherd of Hermas).

Even more striking, perhaps, than the uniform acceptance of our four gospels by the orthodox churchmen, is the fact that each gospel was accepted, sometimes to the exclusion of the others, by one or another of the early heretics. The Ophites, the Basilides, and the Clementine Homilies show an acquaintance with each of the four gospels and do not question their authority; Valentinus used the fourth gospel freely, and Marcion rested on St. Luke's gospel, though he rejected the others. He lived about the same time as Justin Martyr, but was older. Heracleon (early second century) wrote a commentary on St. John's gospel; he also mentions St. Luke.

And what do we learn from all this? That as far back as we have any clear evidence, our four gospels are accepted as authoritative, that they are without rivals, and that in the middle of the second century they are expressly referred to the men whose names they now bear. They were certainly in existence and unquestioningly received soon after the year A.D. 100; that we cannot trace them farther back still is simply due to the fact that no Christian writings are preserved in which they could be mentioned. There is no trace of any difficulty felt in the early Church about accepting them as by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John¹; the fact is quietly assumed everywhere as unquestionable, though, as we shall see, other New Testament books had a big battle for recognition. It would be difficult to find an ancient document whose authorship is more conclusively proved by external evidence.

But let us turn to the books themselves and see what we can discover by our own reading, apart from these literary and historical researches. The most convincing evidences of authenticity are not strident assertions of it such as a forger might insert, but unostentatious personal touches and evidences of special knowledge, especially where the narrative concerns the writer himself, his nationality and his occupation in life. And particularly, if the writer is a Christian gentleman, we may expect modesty in his personal references.

Data in the first gospel for this method of investigation are less abundant than in the others. This is the longest gospel; the writer, being an apostle, had plenty of material. He is evidently a Jew; quotations from the Old Testament are particularly frequent and he often translates from the

¹ The rejection of John by the Alogi is referred to later.

Hebrew instead of using the Septuagint (i.e. the Greek version of the Old Testament from which most of the New Testament quotations are derived). His gospel is based upon a Jewish conception; it is especially the gospel of the Messiah, the Expected King. He mentions his own call by Christ, using his apostolic name Matthew—the other gospels call him Levi—but he does not tell that he rose up and left all to follow, nor does he say that it was he who made the great feast and invited the publicans and sinners to meet his new-found Lord. In the list of the Apostles he alone preserves the disparaging title “Matthew the publican.” Whether the gospel was originally written in Hebrew (i.e. the Aramaic vernacular of Palestine, not classical Hebrew), as is asserted by Papias, Irenæus and later historians, or whether the gospel as we have it was St. Matthew’s version in Greek of the apostolic oral tradition, is a difficult and undecided point. Certainly it does not read like a translation, and its frequent verbal coincidences with the other gospels suggest an original work rather than a translation. Tokens of a date before the destruction of Jerusalem are afforded by the statement that the field of blood is still so called “until this day”; and that a hint is given to Christians to depart from Jerusalem before the siege should be too severe (Matt. xxvii. 8, xxiv. 16).

Tradition is early and unanimous that the second and shortest gospel is Mark’s version of Peter’s discourses (Papias, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian). It evidently goes back to an eye-witness; there are many graphic touches; in almost every narrative he imparts some little vivid detail—for instance, the green grass where the five thousand were fed—which the other evangelists omit. There is something impetuous, Peter-like, in the present tenses, and the frequently recurrent “and immediately.” He narrates actions, and leaves sermons to others. He recalls how the Lord looked, the very Aramaic words He used, and what the crowd said. The references to Peter himself are significant and interesting. The gospel does not gloss over his faults, nor the rebukes he suffered—“Get thee behind Me, Satan”; the account of the Denial is very detailed, and alone mentions that the cock crowed twice. In the other gospels Peter went out and wept “bitterly”; here, “he wept.” It is to Peter that Christ said in the garden of Gethsemane, “Simon, why sleepest thou? couldst thou not watch one hour?” And the history as Peter told it simply *could* not omit the Easter message, “Go, tell His disciples, and Peter.” In all probability there is a personal reference

to Mark, too, as the unnamed young man who rose without waiting to dress to watch the soldiers take Jesus into Jerusalem at midnight, and nearly got arrested himself. If this was not the lad John Mark himself, living as he did with his mother in the city, it is very difficult to see why it has been related. Papias tells us that Mark had not been a follower or a hearer of the Lord during His ministry. The fact that the gospel is so brief, and omits so much that must have been known to Peter, suggests that he himself was not the writer.

Perhaps the marks of identification in the first two gospels may seem to be rather indefinite, and the external evidence of authorship—the quiet, unquestioning acceptance which these writings secured from the earliest times—seems stronger than the internal. But in the third gospel the internal evidence is extraordinarily interesting and conclusive. Let us suppose that it has come down to us under no name or a false name, and nothing known as to the date, and let us with nothing but an English and a Greek New Testament try to arrive at a conclusion *de novo* for ourselves.

Our first observation will be that whoever wrote the third gospel also wrote the Acts of the Apostles. The Acts refers to a "former treatise" describing the work and teaching of the Lord; this must be one of our four gospels, or else it is lost. Both are addressed to Theophilus, whoever that may be, and the one takes up the story just where the other leaves off. The very characteristic Greek style of the two is identical. This will be a very useful conclusion, as it opens to us new evidence.

Turning next to the preface of the gospel, we find that the writer does not claim to be either an apostle or an eye-witness himself, but he does claim to have derived his information from such by careful research. There are no references to himself in the gospel narrative. Turning over to the Acts, however, we find there incorporated in the story, which is written for the most part in the third person, certain portions where the "he" and "they" gives place to "we" and "us" (Acts xvi. 10-34; xx. 6-xxi. 18; xxvii. 1-xxviii. 16), and wherever this occurs the narrative suddenly fills out into full detail, and we are told what islands the voyagers passed and on what side of the ship, whether they sailed straight or tacked, close in shore or far out at sea, whom they met and how they were treated. Compare, for instance, the cursory notice of Paul's second visit to Corinth (Acts xx. 2, 3) with the account of the journey from Troas to Cæsarea (xx. 13-xxi. 8). It is

perfectly clear that the author joined Paul's party on these occasions, though he is too modest to say so. It is scarcely credible that this can be forgery ; if it is, it is singularly clever, determined and dishonest. There are other tokens that the author of the third gospel and St. Paul had something in common. The record of the words spoken at the institution of the Last Supper in Corinthians agrees closely with Luke's account, not so closely with that given by the other evangelists.

Yet another evidence of personal knowledge is our writer's extraordinarily accurate use of the exact titles of the notables in the various cities visited, all confirmed by inscriptions discovered in modern times—*proconsuls* in Achaia and Cyprus, a *procurator* in Judæa, *king* Herod Agrippa, *chief-man* Publius at Malta, *politarchs* in Thessalonica, *asiarchs* and a *town-clerk* at Ephesus. Some of these were highly peculiar and local titles special to one place alone. Sir Wm. Ramsay tells us how, beginning as a " Higher Critic " as a student, a small fact arrested his attention and caused a complete change of view ; " The detail that first caught my attention was a slight matter in itself, but just the sort of small, incidental, unimportant circumstance by which date and knowledge or ignorance are tested. In Acts xiv. 6, Paul and Barnabas are said to have fled to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe. No one could speak thus who did not know that the boundary of Lycaonia was so drawn that in going down from Iconium to Lystra, Paul crossed the frontier and entered the district of Lycaonia." Early in the second century the boundary was altered. Therefore the Acts was written in the first century.

The next point has only been noticed in comparatively recent years ; it is quite clear that whoever wrote the third gospel and the Acts was a physician. This appears from a great variety of evidence, of which we can only relate a small part. There are in the two books at least twenty-three technical medical expressions, used by no other New Testament writer, but found in the works of Galen, Hippocrates and other Greek medical writers of the period. By a curious coincidence, some of them, as " diagnosis," " thrombi," " dysentery " and " syndrome," are technical medical terms in modern English also. Again, four different words are used by our author for different varieties of bed ; he carefully specifies whether an ailment is congenital or acquired, and which side is affected—every medical student has to be taught to be precise about these details to-day. He alone of the evangelists records the proverb quoted, " Physician, heal thyself," which would

be likely to stick in a doctor's memory. What he does not say is also noteworthy. We can well imagine Peter relating in Mark's hearing about the sick woman who had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, but, as he caustically adds, was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse; when a physician tells the story, he is more polite to the profession! ¹

One more token; our author writes good fluent Greek, and does not show the signs of Hebraic origin that are so manifest in Paul (who often thinks and writes like a rabbi), or Matthew, or John in the Apocalypse.

Finally, as to the date; we are definitely told that the Acts was published after the gospel; the destruction of Jerusalem is spoken of as still future, and the narrative of the Acts breaks off, seemingly for no reason at all, with Paul still a prisoner at Rome and his case not yet tried. It is well known that Paul was liberated and had many interesting experiences after this, and the natural conclusion surely must be that Acts was written while he was still confined in his own hired house, and his fate uncertain. In that case the date of publication would be about A.D. 62, and the gospel a year, or several years, earlier. The curious textual omissions of the Latin and cognate versions (Western text), especially in the latter parts of the gospel, suggest that it was published in two or more editions by the author. Another point in favour of an early date is the absence of references to Gnostic and Cerinthian heresies.

Gathering up our scattered threads, we have to look for an educated Greek, not a Jew, not an apostle and not mentioned in the lifetime of Jesus, a physician, and an occasional companion of the Apostle Paul, and having access to eye-witnesses of the Lord's life in Palestine. Only one person fits the picture. That is Luke—"Luke the beloved physician"—"only Luke is with me" (Col. iv. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 11). The evidence, especially that of the medical terms which lay unnoticed for 1,800 years, is beyond forgery. So we come by our own modern researches to just the same conclusion as that which was common knowledge to the early Christians.

There are no facts to lead us to call in question the traditional authorship of the first three gospels, and we have found that they were universally accepted by the earliest writers whose

¹ Hobart: *The Medical Knowledge of St. Luke*. Cf. Mark v. 26 with Luke viii. 43. "Which had spent all her living upon physicians," in Luke, is omitted by very important authorities (B, D, the Sinai Syriac, most of the Egyptian, Armenian).

books or letters furnish any evidence on the subject, at the beginning of the second century. This means, of course, that they had been in existence for a generation at least, or that persons living could verify that they were written in their time by the apostolic men whose names they bore : they could not have acquired such a repute if they had recently seen the light. Internal evidence for the first two gospels is respectable, and for the third absolutely conclusive—the most conclusive in ancient literature. So much is generally admitted. When we turn to the fourth gospel, we find that some scholars take serious objection to its Johannine authorship, especially those who deny the Deity of Christ to which it bears such uncompromising testimony, and these objections must be fairly considered.

We commence with a statement of the orthodox position. Clement of Alexandria, at the end of the second century, states that according to “the early presbyters,” “last of all John, perceiving that the bodily facts had been set forth in the other gospels, at the instance of his disciples and with the inspiration of the Spirit, composed a spiritual gospel.” Irenæus of southern France, who lived about the same time and had sat at the feet of Polycarp who was a direct hearer of John, gives similar testimony, and tells us that the apostle in his old age lived at Ephesus, to which fact all early tradition agrees. Some beautiful legends cluster about his residence there (e.g. the story of the robber).

Now to this it is objected :

- (1) That the style of the Apocalypse is so unlike that of the gospel and the epistles that they cannot both be by John ;
- (2) That his gospel was rejected by a sect called the Alogi ;
- (3) That according to Papias, “John the son of Zebedee” was put to death by the Jews (there is an obscure entry in a fifth-century martyrology that may possibly confirm this) ;
- (4) That the fourth gospel presents such a different picture of Christ, such a developed theology, and the comments of the evangelist are so like in tone to Christ’s utterances, that it must be much later than the other gospels and by a writer of a different school.

Now of these objections, the first presents an authentic difficulty, the two next are trivial and savour of clutching at straws, and to the fourth there is a satisfactory answer.

That the Greek of the Apocalypse differs widely from that of the gospel and epistles is allowed by practically all scholars. It shows a strong Hebraic tinge, and although the writer can

write good Greek where he likes, he sometimes sets the laws of grammar at defiance. That is the fact; how it is to be explained is a problem to which many answers are possible. Some critics (as Dionysius of Alexandria in the third century) have accepted the gospel whilst denying that the Apocalypse was by John the Apostle; others (Baur and the Tübingen school) have accepted the Revelation but refused the authenticity of the gospel; and a few (e.g. Dr. Charles) reject both. But there is another side to the story. The marks of a common origin for the gospel, epistles and Apocalypse are even stronger than the diversities. Every one must have noticed the peculiar and extensive use made by the writer of the gospel of certain words—life, light, true, lamb, pierce, thirst, witness, the Word, etc.; these also characterize the Apocalypse. Only in St. John's gospel and the Revelation (except for a purely historical allusion in Hebrews) is the manna mentioned. In one Old Testament quotation, the gospel and the Apocalypse both diverge in the same way from the Septuagint (Jn. xix. 37; Apoc. i. 7). No explanation that accounts for the divergencies is adequate if it does not also cover the coincidences. By far the most probable theory is that John wrote both, but under different circumstances and with different objects. The Revelation may have been written in Hebrew and translated into Greek (as Papias says St. Matthew's gospel was); or it may have been compiled much earlier, and under different circumstances. If, as we have reason to believe, John wrote the gospel when he was about ninety, and that in a day when no such thing as spectacles had been invented, he must surely have needed help, as we know Paul did, and for the gospel he may have had a skilled Greek scholar as amanuensis. And after all, is it so very uncommon for two of an author's works to be totally unlike? Compare, for instance, Tennyson's *Idylls* and his dialect poems; Kipling's *Recessional* and his *Barrack-room Ballads*. A striking example is John Masefield's *Everlasting Mercy*; it might be divided into two parts in such a way that those who did not know the poem would deny that they could possibly be by the same author. Burns' Scotch and English poems are very unlike; compare also Chaucer's *Romaunt of the Rose* and the *Canterbury Tales*. The Apocalypse is saturated with Hebrew thought and Hebrew writings, such as Daniel, Ezekiel and others of the prophets, and this would naturally tinge the language.

Concerning the Alogi, we know practically nothing about them except that they rejected the doctrine of the Logos (the

Word), and so refused John's writings, just as Marcion the heretic on doctrinal, not literary or historic, grounds rejected all the gospels except Luke. They were a small and obscure sect, or scattered individuals held together by a theory, about the end of the second century. Only Epiphanius, writing hundreds of years later, clearly refers to them, and they were of so little importance that Eusebius was able to say that the gospel was unquestioned in his own or any previous generation.

It is only from very late, uncertain and fragmentary sources that we are informed that Papias said that John the son of Zebedee was slain by the Jews (Georgius Hamartolos in the ninth century, and the de Boor fragment), and it is probable that both these depend on one Philip of Side, a notorious bungler. These may be mistaken; even if Papias did make the statement, it may not be true; even if it is true, the martyrdom may have taken place in Ephesus and at a late date. Irenæus and Clement are good, early witnesses whose general reliability we can test by their copious writings now in our hands, and they both tell us that John lived at Ephesus to a great old age, and that he wrote the gospel there; the Muratorian fragment also categorically states the latter fact.

If it is argued that the doctrine of the Johannine writings must have taken long to develop, the answer is, first, that equally full doctrine is found in St. Paul's epistles, which were certainly written before A.D. 70, whereas no one claims that John wrote before 90. The differences in the picture of the Lord and the phraseology of His discourses, as compared with the other gospels, really raise questions of trustworthiness rather than of authenticity, but when it is remembered that the fourth gospel preserves for us the private conversation of Jesus with His disciples, and the events and discourses of the Judæan rather than of the Galilean ministry, it is clear that there is room for variation. Any first-rate preacher would speak very differently in a university town and in a country village, and Jerusalem audiences were very unlike the simple fisher-folk of Capernaum. No doubt it was particular aspects of Christ's teaching, and certain favourite expressions of His, that burned themselves into John's soul, and became part of his daily habit of thought. There are, however, passages in the synoptic gospels that show up the same aspect of Christ's teaching which appealed so much to John (e.g. Matt. xi. 25-30; Luke x. 22). The fourth gospel was evidently written to be supplementary to the others; they, or their substance, being taken as well known. Also, it was probably

compiled to meet a particular heresy concerning the nature of Christ (the heresy of Cerinthus). Hence the different atmosphere.

Turning now to the positive side, we find, as already stated, clear evidence that the fourth gospel was known from the very beginning of the second century; it is quoted by Ignatius, who was martyred either A.D. 107 or 116. From the first it was always attributed to John. Renan, the French arch-sceptic, admits that the external evidence for this gospel is as strong as for the others. And the internal evidence, for those who are not prejudiced by having a theory to maintain that the doctrine of the Deity of Christ took a century to develop, seems quite conclusive that it was written by John the Apostle. Let us here also suppose that we have no information, or a false tradition, as to the author, and that we seek the truth simply with the aid of a Greek and an English New Testament.

Was he a Palestinian Jew? Undoubtedly. Read through the book and observe the number of small place-names incidentally recorded for no apparent reason except that they come naturally to the writer. There is a Bethany beyond Jordan, another Bethany fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, Bethsaida, Cana of Galilee, Ænon near Salim where the Jordan flowed deep, Sychar near the bit of ground that belonged to Jacob, Ephraim across Jordan. The accuracy of several of these has been confirmed by recent exploration. He knows his Jerusalem as a Euston taxi-driver knows his London—Bethesda and its five porches, the sheepgate, the pool of Siloam, the treasury, the valley of the Kidron, the garden on the mount of Olives, Gabbatha, Golgotha the place of a skull, Solomon's porch in the temple on the east side, where it was warmest to walk in winter. Yet he was writing at least twenty years after Jerusalem had been as thoroughly desolated by war as Ypres and Lens were in 1919, and he was at Ephesus, a thousand miles away.

He knows all about Jewish usages and explains them—the large stone jars of water for purifying, “a feast of the Jews” unnamed, probably Purim, the feast of tabernacles, the feast of the dedication which was instituted in the days of the Maccabees. All these things are mentioned in a natural, unnecessary way. When the book was written, they were all things of the long past.

He uses Aramaic words—Siloam, Gabbatha, Golgotha, Rabboni, Cephas and translates them for his readers. We look in vain for all the above tokens in the third gospel, which was written by a Gentile.

But there is more than this; his thoughts are Jewish—

about the coming Messiah, the Word, prenatal sin, the enormity of a rabbi speaking to a woman, baptism, the hostility of the Jews and the Samaritans. He uses the Old Testament as a Jew would; quoting it frequently, and often sticking to the Hebrew where it diverges from the Septuagint.

We agree that he was a Jew of Palestine, then—was he an Apostle? There is much to suggest it. He gives us, more than any other writer, the intimate discourses of the Lord and the twelve, and what they thought and said amongst themselves, also what they overheard the crowd say.¹ His sketches of Philip and Andrew and Peter and Thomas and Judas and Mary are drawn from the life. He knows where their original homes were, Philip, Andrew and Peter of Bethsaida, and Nathaniel of Cana.

He definitely claims to be an eye-witness. "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes" (1 John i. 1); "we beheld His glory" (John i. 14); he specially emphasizes how he saw the spear wound made in the Lord's side, and in the two concluding verses of the gospel it is clearly stated that the writer is the disciple whom Jesus loved, so often referred to, and who cannot possibly be anyone else than John. Except under this description, so natural if he were the author, John the son of Zebedee is never mentioned in the fourth gospel. It is interesting to notice that as there were two Johns, the Baptist and the Apostle, the first three gospels are careful to distinguish them; in the fourth, the Baptist is simply "John." If there are two boys at a school, J. Smith and T. Smith, other boys in writing about them will distinguish them by their initials, but when J. is writing, he will speak of the other simply as Smith.

Of course, it may be answered that all this is deep-laid art with intent to deceive (what clever rogues these four evangelists must have been!), but why so deep laid? Why, if so anxious to foist a work on the world as John's, does the writer not sign the name somewhere, or make a definite claim, or use the first person singular when he refers to John in the narrative?

Some reader may have in mind to object that although the gospels are substantially by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, they may have been so edited and amplified that there is no certainty about their testimony. To this, also, there is a com-

¹ John ii. 20-22; iv. 27; vii. 39-44; x. 9, 20; and especially the Last Supper details.

plete answer, which opens up a large and fascinating study that can only be touched on here. We admit promptly that to a slight extent the text has been edited—the Latin text by Jerome, and the Greek and Syrian, probably in the fourth century, by a general consensus of skilled opinion, producing the Latin Vulgate, the Greek Textus Receptus, and the Syrian Peshito. Certain incidents and passages have been added by editors to the text, these additions being omitted or enclosed within brackets in the English Revised Version. The most considerable of them is the so-called Pericope Adulteriæ (John vii. 53–viii. 11). Whether the last twelve verses of St. Mark's gospel are original, or added by an editor, is one of the most interesting and difficult questions in sound Biblical criticism. Certain Western texts (the Codex Bezae and its allies) include a number of editorial additions which have never got into an English New Testament. But the main point lies here—the difference between the original text of the gospels and the “edited” text (so far as it ever gained *general* as opposed to merely “Western” acceptance) is little if any more than the difference between the English Authorized and Revised Versions. It is not claimed that the Greek text underlying the Revised Version is quite perfect, and occasionally the Authorized may be the more accurate, but many of the differences of the two versions are emendations of the translation into English, and not of the Greek text.

How is it that we can claim so confidently that the Greek text of the best critical editions so nearly coincides with that of the apostolic autographs? Because of the wealth of materials, of very diverse origin, from which our critical text can be tested. Not a tithe of such material is available for the reconstruction of the text of any other ancient writings. We have two great fourth-century Greek uncial copies (i.e. manuscripts written in capital letters) of the gospels and most of the New Testament, each with a most romantic history, and a dozen papyrus fragments, some of which are older still (at least five MSS. of the gospels). There are also twenty-two uncials of the gospels, some complete, some fragmentary, of the fifth and sixth centuries, and a host of later uncials and cursives. In the second or at latest the third century, places as far remote as the cities of the upper Nile, and Carthage, and Edessa (in Syria) had Egyptian, and Latin and Syriac versions of the New Testament, and as all these substantially agree in their underlying Greek text, it must be far older than any of them. Then there is Tatian's Diatessaron, already

referred to. Again, we have copious quotations from the gospels by scores of early Christian writers of the second, third and fourth centuries, as well as many later. All these varied authorities not only bear witness to the text as we have it, but also have as it were stood sentinel over the wording to prove that at no time has it been tampered with. Heretics as well as the orthodox show no deviation from the standard (Marcion, Tatian). So the wording as we have it is proven to be so fixed and generally accepted at the beginning of the second century (that is, within a score of years of the completion of the last gospel) that no one dared to take liberties with it, though copyists might accidentally include somebody's marginal comment in the text (this is the most probable origin of Acts viii. 37 and 1 John v. 7).

The discovery within recent years of copies on papyrus in Egypt of the various classical authors shows how accurately the ancients copied even plays and histories. Sir F. G. Kenyon states that "the tradition of the classical texts is substantially sound, and that the best vellum MSS. of the tenth and later centuries are as good as and often better than the Egyptian papyri of a thousand years earlier."

But there is another line of defence, not dependent on history; if there had been a commingling of hands in the pages of the gospel narratives, it could not have failed beneath the fiery criticism to which they have been subjected to reveal some difference of style. This, with the exceptions noticed in a Revised Version Bible, has never been proved.

The evidence for the greater part of the rest of the New Testament is as conclusive as that for the gospels. If we turn back to the table of quotations collected by the Oxford Historical Theology Committee, we find that the earliest-known Christian writers quote Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Hebrews and 1 Peter expressly by name, and there are indubitable references to nearly all Paul's epistles. Acts and James are probably quoted also. The internal marks of genuineness in St. Paul's writings are so conclusive that they can scarcely be challenged; even the Tübingen school were constrained to acknowledge Romans, Galatians and the two epistles to the Corinthians. Acts stands or falls with St. Luke's gospel and must therefore be accepted. All the evidence that holds good for the fourth gospel goes to prove the authenticity of the first epistle of John, which was undoubtedly written by the same hand that penned the gospel

There is clear evidence that the churches in the first three centuries jealously guarded the canon of the acknowledged books, and exercised a keen critical sense as to their authenticity and authority. Writer after writer says of the non-canonical books, even when they bore the name of an apostle (Peter, Barnabas, etc.) that they were not acknowledged in the churches. They were, if possible, keener on excluding uncertain books than on including all the truly apostolic writings. The Old Latin New Testament included all the books in the English version except Hebrews, James and 2 Peter. The Syriac New Testament included Hebrews and James, but omitted 2 and 3 John, Jude, Revelation and 2 Peter. No books which are not found in our New Testament ever gained any general acceptance as part of Holy Scripture. It is a remarkable fact that several of the oldest Christian writings expressly admit their inferiority to the genuine apostolic documents.

Although, as we have seen, seven books of the New Testament were only locally received at first, this seems to be due to the fact that they had not travelled to far-away districts, and not to any doubts as to their genuineness as apostolic writings. The personal nature and slightness of the two later epistles of John and the epistle of Jude no doubt accounts for their restricted circulation at first; nor is it surprising that James and Hebrews, being Jewish in type, should be earlier known in the East than the West. The difficulty about Hebrews was that no one knew who wrote it; Tertullian and the second-century Christians were as much in the dark as we are; but that it was published in apostolic times is certain, for it is quoted by Clement of Rome before A.D. 100, and it seems impossible that it could have been written after the fall of Jerusalem, or the cessation of the Jewish sacrifices must surely have been mentioned somewhere in the epistle, as furnishing the clearest possible evidence that the temple ceremonial had been superseded.

The most difficult book in the New Testament to defend is 2 Peter, because it was not generally received into the canon until the fourth century. Origen (A.D. 186-253) appeared to know it; in a fanciful exposition of the fall of Jericho he speaks of Paul sounding on fourteen trumpets and Peter on two; in another passage he says that Peter perhaps left a second epistle. The real evidence for the book is internal, not external. It is true that it presents some differences in style from the first epistle, but it definitely claims Simon Peter as its author

(2 Peter i. 1, 14, 18) and there are some characteristic Petrine expressions.¹ Perhaps Silvanus helped with the former epistle and not with the latter (*see* 1 Peter v. 12). Jude, whose short epistle is full of quotations, makes use of many expressions recalling 2 Peter, picking out the most striking phrases, using the past tense where Peter uses the future (*cf.* Jude 4, with 2 Peter ii. 1), and definitely referring to the words of the Apostles of the Lord (*cf.* Jude 4, 17, 18 with 2 Peter iii. 3). Thus the internal evidence is all in favour of Jude quoting from Peter and not *vice versa*. If Jude is not quoting from 2 Peter, he must have had before him another letter, by an apostle, using identical phraseology, which has since vanished away. The strongest point in favour of the epistle, of course, is the spiritual beauty and force of its teaching, which have satisfied godly men in all the centuries, since it became widely known, that it ought to be included in the canon. The controversies that it refers to are those of the first century, not the second. If it were a forgery, it would be a particularly impudent one, claiming as it does for its author a place on the mount of transfiguration, and speaking of "our beloved brother Paul."

The reason why certain books are included in the New Testament and others are excluded depends, in the last resort, on the judgment formed by the universal church of all ages that they are or are not inspired of God. This rests partly, but not entirely, on a confidence that they were written by apostles or by apostolic men. Known or suspected forgeries would never have gained a place. It is an historical fact that all the books, except those seven just discussed, have been everywhere accepted from the first; that since the time of Jerome and Augustine the canon has been fixed as it now stands; and that at no time were any other books at all generally accepted. How thoroughly a book was scrutinized and weighed before admission we have already seen. Now, we know that Christ promised the help of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles (John xvi. 12, 13), we know that He accepted the canon of the Old Testament as it had been fixed by the Jews many years before; it is perfectly impossible to maintain that these unknown Jews were correctly guided of God what to include and what to omit, but that the church of the first four centuries, including so many men of known character and godliness, and after the

¹ Cf. 1 Peter i. 19 and 2 Peter iii. 14 (Gk.). For a full account of the problem *see* Zahn's *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. ii. p. 262.

imparting of the Holy Ghost to every believer, came to an erroneous decision.

A few paragraphs may be written indicating what little is known as to the time and method of fixation of the canon of the Old Testament. All sorts of wild theories have been expounded on the subject. A Jewish tradition incorporated in the fourth book of Esdras, about A.D. 90, declared that in Ezra's time many of the books had been lost and that Ezra rewrote the whole perfectly in forty days, seventy books to be kept secret, and twenty-four to be open.¹ This is obviously a fable. A century and more later, another Jewish account was that the canon of the Old Testament was fixed by the men of the "Great Synagogue," but there is no pre-Christian evidence for the existence of such a body, and the early Rabbis and Talmud say nothing about its relation to the canon.

These baseless traditions failing us, we fall back on a few scraps of more reliable evidence. We are on safe ground in stating that in the time of Christ and the Apostles the list of books accepted by them and by nearly all Jews as inspired of God was the same as that in our Old Testament, not including the Apocrypha. Critics and orthodox will generally agree in this, and will agree further that this recognition was no new thing; it had held good for many generations. The story that the Sadducees only accepted the Pentateuch, although resting on the authority of Origen and Jerome, seems to be incorrect. It is true that certain individuals, both Jews and Christians, expressed doubts as to whether one or two books, notably Esther and Ecclesiastes, were rightly included in the canon, but their hesitation rested not on historical grounds, but on their personal opinion of the contents of the books. Thus Melito and Athanasius both omitted Esther, apparently on the ground that it does not contain the name of God, and in the Talmud it is mentioned that in the opinion of such and such a Rabbi, Ecclesiastes and Canticles "defiled not the hands" (in their tradition, the sacred books did defile the hands). These individual opinions do not, however, invalidate the general acceptance, which is abundantly clear from other testimonies.

The New Testament quotes from every book of the Old, except Obadiah, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Canticles and perhaps Nahum. But Obadiah and Nahum

¹So the best manuscripts.

were reckoned by the Jews *en bloc* with the Minor Prophets, and quoting from Chronicles presupposes Ezra. As Josephus and the fourth book of Esdras a few years later both include Ecclesiastes and Canticles and Esther, there is no reasonable doubt that they were to be found in the Jewish scriptures read by the Lord and the Apostles.

Josephus, the Jewish historian, writing towards the end of the first century, mentions that there are twenty-two books given by inspiration of God; five are books of Moses, the prophets thirteen books, and four are hymns to God and practical precepts to men. The Jews and Christians of those days always counted either twenty-two or twenty-four books (e.g. Cyril of Jerusalem, born A.D. 315, writes, "Read the twenty-two books of the Old Testament, which the seventy-two interpreters translated"). The thirteen prophets are Joshua, Judges with Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah with Lamentations, Ezekiel, Minor Prophets, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah with Esther, Daniel, Job. The four in the last category are Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Canticles (Westcott). Josephus quotes from every book in the Old Testament except Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles and Job; the only non-canonical book he refers to is first Maccabees, which he did not regard as inspired because it was after the time of Artaxerxes. He goes on to say, "From the days of Artaxerxes to our own time every event has indeed been recorded, but these recent events have not been deemed worthy of equal credit with those that preceded them, on account of the failure of the exact succession of the prophets. There is practical proof of the spirit in which we treat our scriptures, for although so great an interval of time has now passed, not a soul has ventured either to add or to remove or to alter a syllable; and it is the instinct of every Jew, from the day of his birth, to consider those as the teaching of God, to abide by them, and if need be cheerfully to lay down his life in their behalf." Thus Josephus bears testimony that the canon closes at the reign of Artaxerxes, by whom he means Ahasuerus of the book of Esther, so that Esther is the last historical book in the Old Testament.

Philo of Egypt, who died about A.D. 50, regarded the five books of Moses as fully inspired, and also quotes from nearly all the other books of the Old Testament, but he never quotes from the Apocrypha. Early Christian writers, from the second to the seventh centuries and later, are practically unanimous in accepting the twenty-two (or twenty-four, if Ruth and

Lamentations are reckoned separately) books as constituting the canon.

As to how or when the decision was arrived at which to include and which to reject, we are almost entirely in the dark. There is general agreement that the Law was recognized first; the Samaritan Bible included nothing else, and the book of the law that Ezra read from must have been the five books of Moses. Orthodoxy holds that the book of the law found in the temple in Josiah's reign (2 Kings xxii. 8) was the same; the critics maintain that this was only Deuteronomy, recently forged by Hilkiah or some one behind him. Some collection of the older prophets was recognized in Zechariah's time and also in Daniel's (Zech. vii. 12; Dan. ix. 2). The full number of the prophets was added to the canon somewhere between 300 and 180 B.C. (Ryle); in 180 the writer of Ecclesiasticus refers to Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and then to the "Twelve Prophets." In 132 B.C. Jesus the son of Sirach, in his prologue to Ecclesiasticus, refers to "the Law, the Prophets and the rest of the books," which clearly indicates a more or less well-defined canon.

For two hundred years before Christ came, Palestine was constantly devastated by war, and the Jews suffered great persecution for their religion; for more than a century the sects of the Pharisees and the Sadducees had been hostile to one another. These were not times when the exact delimitation of the sacred books was likely to have been decided upon. When a people are being killed for their religious beliefs and their scriptures, it makes them revere all the more the books they have loved for many generations, but no new ones are likely to be added. We may be sure, then, that though we do not know how or when or by whom, yet probably about 300 B.C., there came to be a general acceptance of certain books, and no more were added to them. We believe that the guidance of God overruled the decision, and that they bound on earth what was bound in heaven. Christ the Son of God gave His approval to the volume as they had constituted it.

A few words may be added about the Apocrypha. All the books composing it were written after the time of Ahasuerus; some were originally in Hebrew (e.g. 1st Maccabees, Ecclesiasticus, Judith, parts of Baruch, ? Tobit); others appear to have been written in Greek. When the Hebrew Bible was translated by various hands into Greek, in Egypt, the books which we now call the Apocrypha came to be bound up with it. The Law was translated, excellently, about 250 B.C.;

the other books, not so well, within the next century; the book of Esther in Greek bears the date of translation, 178 B.C. A certain number of Christians have always regarded the Apocrypha as scripture, because they could not read anything but Greek and did not know the history of the various books bound up together, partly Old Testament and partly Apocrypha. Especially in Egypt did the Christians fall into this error. But the Jews never recognized any of the books of the Apocrypha as inspired (there are one or two doubtful admissions of Ecclesiasticus in the vast Jewish literature called the Talmud). It is never quoted as such by Josephus or Philo. The New Testament never refers to it or quotes from it. There is a strange passage, Jude 14-15, which appears to quote from the book of Enoch, written perhaps fifty or a hundred years before Christ and of composite origin—a very remarkable book, hailing the coming of the Messiah. But even if the passage is derived from this source, and not a saying remembered by tradition and made use of both by Jude and the writer of this book, this does not prove that the book of Enoch is inspired. It does not form part of the Apocrypha as generally recognized. Even amongst Christians, the better educated realized from the first that the Apocrypha has no claim, either historically or from the intrinsic value of its contents, to be regarded as part of holy scripture. Melito, Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius and Jerome all helped to avert any general acceptance of it, though they knew it and quoted from it. The Peshito Syriac translation of the Old Testament did not include the Apocrypha, and Jerome did not translate it along with the Hebrew books into his Vulgate (Latin) version. As is well known, the Council of Trent in 1545 decided to regard the Apocrypha as scripture; Luther rejected it, and since that time, speaking generally, the Roman Catholics have accepted it, and Protestants have not.

APPROXIMATE DATES OF SOME OF THE WRITINGS REFERRED TO

A.D.

400—Jerome, Epiphanius.

320—Eusebius (Cæsarea).

240—Origen (Alexandria).

200—Tertullian (Carthage); Clement (Alexandria).

180—Irenæus (Lyons).

170—Tatian.

150—Justin Martyr; Polycarp (Smyrna).

A.D.

145—Papias (Phrygia).

140—Hermas ; Marcion.

110—Barnabas ; Ignatius (Antioch).

95—Clement (Rome).

90—Gospel, epistles and Revelation (?) of St. John ; Didaché.

[70—Destruction of Jerusalem.]

65—St. Paul's prison epistles ; Hebrews.

60—St. Luke's gospel ; Acts ; St. Mark's gospel (?) .

55—St. Paul's earlier epistles (Thessalonians, Corinthians, Romans, Galatians).

50—St. Matthew's gospel (?) ; epistle of James (?) .

[32—The Crucifixion.]

BOOKS

WESTCOTT—*Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*. Rather old, but a first-class authority.

SALMON—*Introduction to the New Testament*. More modern.

ZAHN—*Introduction to the New Testament*. Contains a full defence of the authenticity of the various books, by a front-rank modern German scholar. Three volumes.

SANDAY—*Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*.

WESTCOTT—*On the Canon of the New Testament*.

HORT—*Introduction to Westcott and Hort's New Testament in the Original Greek*.

SCRIVENER—*Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*. These two books, Hort and Scrivener, present two aspects of the criticism of the text of the New Testament (the so-called "Lower Criticism"). Scrivener leans more to the received text, but it is perhaps more interesting to read Hort first on this fascinating subject. A little knowledge of Greek is necessary.

Novum Testamentum Græce—Souter's edition (Oxford Clarendon Press). Gives the various readings of all the principal manuscripts and versions.

HOBART—*Medical Language of St. Luke*. Rather old, but full of points.

ROBERTSON—*Luke the Historian in the Light of Research* (T. and T. Clark, 1920). Sets forth a complete vindication of Luke as an accurate historian. The writer shows his remarkably well-informed use of nautical terms in the great shipwreck story, his knowledge of Roman Law, his careful geography, and his understanding of the proper titles of all the petty officials in various provincial towns. Again and again Luke has been accused of inaccuracy, but recent research has vindicated him. The census of Quirinius has already been referred to (*see* note at end of Chapter V). It was once declared that Lysanias ruled in Abilene in 36 B.C. and that Luke was sixty years out in his chronology ; an inscription lately found at Abila shows that there was another Lysanias ruling there between A.D. 14 and 29. The only serious outstanding difficulty left now is that Luke and Josephus differ as to the date of Theudas ; but Josephus has so often been proved to be wrong and Luke so often right that even if they both refer to the same Theudas we may be pardoned for preferring to believe the evangelist, till the matter is cleared up by further evidence.

CHAPTER VII

Inspiration

WE now come to one of the most difficult problems with which we are faced in this book—the problem of inspiration. Perhaps far too much has been spoken and written about it, too many theories formed, too many discussions as to how men were inspired, whether the same kind of inspiration was needed in each case, and other questions more curious than useful. It is our intention in this chapter to find out what the Bible claims for itself. It is equally unfair to demand more for it than it asks for itself, or to demand less ; earnest Christians have erred in both directions. Having gathered together what the Bible teaches as to the method and manner in which it came to be written, we shall see how far the substance of the Scripture text endorses that claim, what external endorsements there are, and finally we must face fairly the difficulties which arise. There are many who do not feel themselves able to accept some of the theories of inspiration which are put forward by Christian apologists, and, more especially, they find it difficult to believe in the attempts made by such writers to force the text of Scripture into an agreement with their ready-made theories. It will be our aim not to approach the Bible with a fixed formula of inspiration and to make everything fit in with it whatever violence is done thereby to the text, but rather to consider in a receptive spirit the facts which we find at our disposal in the Book itself

In the first place we shall find that both the Old Testament and the New declare that the “law” is the Word of God. The “law” consisted of the five books of Moses, according to the familiar Jewish division of the Scriptures. “Behold,” says Moses, “I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me” (Deut. iv. 5). If the reader will take up a Bible and open it quite at random any-

where between the middle of Exodus and the end of Deuteronomy, he will almost certainly find somewhere on the page such words as "the Lord said unto Moses," or "as the Lord commanded Moses," or "God spake all these words." It is almost safe to risk the challenge in a public meeting. Such expressions as these, claiming as they do the direct inspiration of God for this part of the Bible, occur 501 times, or about three times in every chapter. Nehemiah centuries later spoke of "the book of the law of Moses which the Lord had commanded to Israel" (Neh. viii. 1).

Take the Psalms. David announced that at least one of his Psalms was given by God; "the spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was upon my tongue" (2 Sam. xxiii. 2). Peter confirms this claim—"It was needful that the Scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost spake before by the mouth of David" (Acts i. 16), and again, "Lord, Thou art God, . . . Who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said" (Acts iv. 24-25).

Open a Bible again at random anywhere in the Prophets, Isaiah, Hosea, or even the little prophecy of Obadiah, and on almost any page you will find a "Thus saith the Lord" or some similar claim. Try it. And Nehemiah declares in no ambiguous language that "yet many years didst Thou forbear them (Israel) and testifiedst against them by Thy spirit in Thy prophets" (Neh. ix. 30). Zechariah almost at the close of the Old Testament canon speaks of "the words which the Lord of Hosts had sent by His Spirit by the hand of the former prophets" (Zech. vii. 12). Continually in the gospels we find such words as "Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet saying" (Matt. i. 22). Similar testimony is borne to the prophets by the writers of the epistles again and again.

The New Testament makes the same claims for itself. Paul repeatedly and in the most solemn manner declared that he was simply the mouthpiece of God. He rejoices that his converts received from him the "word of the message, even the word of God" and accepted it "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God." "Which things we speak," he says, "not in the words which men's wisdom teacheth." In one remarkable passage where he admits that he is not sure of the inward divine voice, he "gives his judgment," and thinks also that he has the spirit of God! This makes his confident claim elsewhere all the stronger. Peter freely puts Paul's writings on a par with Holy Scripture. John in the first verse of the

Revelation ascribes it to God, and in his first epistle he says, "This is the message which we have heard from Him."¹

What was the attitude of Jesus Christ to the Scriptures? Needless to say, for the believer in His Deity at least, His testimony must hold the supreme place. We find that He recognized that the Holy Spirit spoke through the Old Testament writers. Quoting from a Psalm He said, "David himself said in the Holy Spirit." Again, He recognized the human and the divine origin of the law—"For Moses said . . . but ye say . . . making void the Word of God by your tradition."² He also accepted as authentic the history of the Old Testament. He spoke of the doom of Sodom and Gomorrah, the story of David and the shewbread, the Deluge, the story of Jonah in the whale's belly, the cleansing of Naaman, the miraculous feeding of the widow of Zarephath, the serpent in the wilderness, and the daily supply of manna.³ In each of these cases He speaks of them in the manner of one who accepts them as sober history. He also believed in and testified to the fulfilment of prophecy. "But that the Scripture may be fulfilled"; "How then should the Scriptures be fulfilled?"; words like these were continually on His tongue. His endorsement of the Old Testament may be summed up in His words, "The Scripture cannot be broken."⁴

For the obvious reason that the New Testament was not yet written, our Lord does not endorse it directly, but He very solemnly claimed the Amen of God the Father for all His own teaching when He said, "Whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak." However, He anticipated the formation of the New Testament when He said to the disciples in the upper chamber, "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." And again, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth."⁵ These two sayings seem to set the stamp of His authority upon the teaching of the

¹ 1 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Cor. ii. 13; 1 Cor. vii. 25-40; 2 Peter iii. 15, 16; 1 John i. 5.

² Mark xii. 36; vii. 10, 13.

³ Matt. x. 15; Mark ii. 26; Matt. xxiv. 37; xii. 40; Luke iv. 26, 27; John iii. 14; vi. 49.

⁴ John xiii. 18; Matt. xxvi. 54; John x. 35.

⁵ John xiv. 26; xvi. 12, 13.

Apostles, as containing all the truth, in fact truth of a more advanced nature than He Himself taught. To the Apostles, also, was given the power to do miraculous works of healing ; they were thus marked out as having a special gift from God in more ways than one.

As a matter of fact, the attitude of the Jews to their Scriptures during the first century is well known from the detailed statement of Josephus quoted in our previous chapter, and the usage of Christ and the Apostles exactly accords with that statement, to which they would undoubtedly have subscribed.

It is plain from the above that both in the Old and New Testament the authors believed themselves and were believed by others to have a very real message from God ; that they were channels through which God spoke to men. But we can go further, and find certain passages which go into some detail as to the exact method in which they got their message, though we are not told enough to set all questions at rest. " All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness " (2 Tim. iii. 16). Much ink has been spilt uselessly over the difference between the A.V. and the R.V. rendering of this verse ; as a matter of fact the weight of evidence seems to be on the side of the older translation as we have quoted it. But whether we put the " is " before or after the " given by inspiration of God " (literally " God-breathed), " we do not alter the meaning. Doubtless the Apostle is thinking particularly of the Old Testament Scriptures, the accepted canon of the Jewish Bible, as God-breathed, in contra-distinction to the apocryphal and traditional literature, but when we read the chapter carefully and compare the fourteenth verse, " Abide thou in the things thou hast learned, knowing of whom thou hast learned them, " with the thirteenth verse of the first chapter, " Hold fast the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard *from me*, " there is at least a probability that when Paul wrote the sixteenth verse he may have had his own writings in mind, as Peter certainly had when he includes the epistles of " our beloved brother Paul " in " the Scriptures " (2 Pet. iii. 16).

Another passage lets us further into the secret of inspiration. Peter writes, " Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you ; searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the

glories that should follow them. To whom it was revealed that not unto themselves, but unto you did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you, by the Holy Ghost sent forth from heaven" (1 Peter i. 10-12). From this important passage we see that the prophets spoke a message from God through the Spirit of Christ which, as it were, possessed them and caused them to write words of which they only partially understood the meaning. It is very plain that in addition to any information they might have gained by personal knowledge or careful study, they were inspired to write things which were above the reach of their own understanding.

Another passage is to be found in 2 Peter i. 21, where we read that "no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation; for no prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." Although the meaning of the first clause has been much discussed, it seems to indicate that no prophecy of Scripture is the result of the prophet's own foreseeing insight, but is a direct result of men speaking under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The word "moved" here suggests the idea of being driven like a ship before the wind; the same word is used of Paul's ship being driven before the tempestuous Euroclydon.

But this claim of being entirely under the influence of the Spirit is not only made for the prophets; it is made for the Apostles themselves. Paul writing to the Corinthians says, "Now we (i.e. the Apostles) have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual," which Alford interprets as "attaching spiritual words to spiritual things." Here we see that there is the same Spirit-given message, but in this case the message is understood by those who give it, and is for the edification of the hearers.

This leads us on to our next question. To what extent are the Scriptures inspired? The passage quoted seems to show clearly that even the words are God-given. This must also be deduced from Galatians iii. 16, where Paul uses the difference between the singular and the plural, "seed" or "seeds," quoting from Genesis, as the basis for an argument. Now whatever modern scholars may think as to the suitability of this quotation, it is impossible to deny that Paul believed thoroughly that the actual words of the Old Testament were

inspired, or he could not have used them in this manner. But the final endorsement of this inspiration of the actual words of the Scripture is given by Christ Himself, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. v. 18). There can be little doubt here from the previous verse that our Lord meant by the law not merely the Pentateuch, but all the Old Testament. This is a common New Testament usage.¹ The jot was the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet; the tittle was the little turn of the stroke by which similar letters were distinguished. Such a claim, coming as it does from our Lord's own lips, proves how important He held that doctrine to be. We are quite aware that there are those who would assert that Christ willingly acquiesced in the ignorant errors of His times. But surely if He were doing so in this case, when He makes the statement as emphatic as it can possibly be, it would be nothing more than hypocrisy. Anyhow, the kenosis theory is dealt with elsewhere in this book, and we shall not discuss it here.

Let us then sum up the claims that the Bible makes for itself. We see that the whole of the Old and New Testaments are asserted to be God-breathed; the writers themselves claim to be impelled by the Spirit of God, and that not merely the ideas are given them but the very words in which those ideas are to be expressed. Sometimes in the case of predictions, especially concerning the Messiah, the writers do not fully understand the purport of their message, but this is not normally the case. The claim is that Scripture is everywhere the utterance, the word, of divine wisdom, and that it expresses the very ideas which the Holy Spirit intended. We must admit at once that it is absurd to speak of any work of human genius, such as Tennyson's *In Memoriam* or Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* as inspired in any such sense as *this*. Neither author would have dreamed of claiming it.

THE UNITY OF THE BOOK

If then the Book demands so much for itself, it must needs be a very remarkable document, the most wonderful in the world in fact, for not even the Koran of Mohammed makes such a claim. We shall expect to find some unique features about it; and if we study it carefully we are not likely to be disappointed.

First let us consider the Book as a whole. As has often been

¹ Cf. John vii. 49, x. 34, xii. 34, xv. 25; Rom. iii. 19; 1 Cor. xiv. 21.

said since the days of Jerome, it is a "Divine Library," consisting of sixty-six separate volumes prepared by about forty different writers of every class in society, from kings to fishermen, from priests to publicans. These volumes were composed over a period of at least a thousand years. It comes to us "by divers portions and in divers manners": yet it makes not many books, but one "Bible." It was, as Westcott says, a happy solecism when in the thirteenth century the neuter plural "Biblia" came to be regarded as a feminine singular, and the "Books" became by common consent the "Book."¹ This is well brought out by comparing it with the Koran. This consists of 114 Suras or chapters arranged chiefly according to length, the shorter at the end. It would be impossible to make one organic whole out of them, and probably no one has ever tried. But as we study the Bible we see that there is a connected story which runs throughout the book. We feel that the first chapter of Genesis is linked in no uncertain manner with the last chapter in Revelation. This is no fiction of the imagination; it has been acknowledged all through the ages. "No other literature," says Kirkpatrick, "is linked into one whole like this, instinct with one spirit and purpose, and with all its variety of character and origin, moving forward to an unseen yet certain goal."²

This fact of the organic unity of the Bible may be so observed in several different ways. All Bible critics have noticed that the religion of Israel is a religion of hope. There is always a feeling of expectancy abroad. In whatever stage the religion of the Old Testament is observed, it will be found to give us the impression of something which is temporary, shaping itself gradually like some wonderful picture under the brush of the master-painter, where colours are laid on with no uncertain hand, sometimes apparently crudely and at random; in the early stages there is much that seems purposeless, but there is always in view the completed work, and the means are justified in the end. So throughout the Old Testament we see the old covenant foreshadowing and ready to give place to the new—a covenant more spiritual and less concerned with outward forms. The narrow bounds of nationality are to be broken up, and Israel is to enjoy a wider sphere of influence under the world-wide domination of the Lord God. However gloomy the outlook, the Jews rejoiced in the prospect of the day when the nations were to come to the light which shone

¹ Westcott: *Bible in the Church*, p. 5.

² Kirkpatrick: *Divine Library of the Old Testament*, p. 92.

forth from their midst. And side by side with this, there was gradually revealed throughout the Old Testament the picture of the Messiah, first as the distant descendant who is to bring blessing to all nations, then as the one in whom the throne of David is made sure ; gradually we see Him as the Virgin's Son, the Wonderful, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace, then as the Servant who is to be despised, rejected and slain, and yet at the same time a mighty conqueror who shall restore Israel. As we read our New Testament can we fail to see how all these traits are found in the person of Jesus of Nazareth and in Him alone ? Destructive critics have been hard put to it to explain away the wonderful fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Let anyone study the chapter carefully and then judge for himself how far it fits in with the story of the suffering Saviour of whom we read in the gospels. We believe that he will not be able to avoid the conclusion that the New Testament story is the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecy (*see* Chap. v., first part).

We will do no more here than refer again to another ligament which runs through the Bible, binding it into a unity ; that is the types to which reference has already been made. A good example of this is found in the letter to the Hebrews, where the writer sees in all the old ritual of the Tabernacle the shadows which have passed away, and given place to the reality which has now come—as Orr says, “ do not we see in this the rationale of the old economy. When the Book of Revelation tells of Paradise restored and figures the tree of life growing in the midst, do we not feel that the end of revelation in very truth looks back to the beginning, and that here the ruin of Eden is repaired, and the curse of man's first disobedience, which brought death into our world and all our woe finally abolished ? ” ¹ Closely connected with this is the unity which is made by the purposefulness of the history with which the Old Testament deals. There is from the beginning the “ one far-off divine event ” which controls all the actors, though they themselves have but a dim apprehension of it. Starting with the creation we pass on to the ruin of man and the first promise of blessing. Here begins what has been called the “ Highway of the Seed,” for the line of Seth becomes the line along which the blessing is given. Then comes a period of growing impiety ending with the judgment of the flood. In Noah the promises made to Adam are continued and then come to Abraham ; the nation of Israel is, as has been said, a slender rill drawn off by God through which He may purify at last the great river

¹ Orr : *Problem of the Old Testament*, p. 35.

itself. Once again there is a definite choice of the line along which the blessing shall flow. Isaac is chosen and not Ishmael, and again of Isaac's sons Jacob is chosen and not Esau. In Egypt this people lose for a time their blessings, but their covenant remains with them. Again a leader is divinely appointed in the person of Moses, and the history advances once more through the sufferings and mistakes of the wilderness journey and on to the promised land. Here again, through endless preparation by defeats, by victories, in exile and at home, at last the long hoped for promise is fulfilled and "in the fulness of time" the salvation of Christ appeared. So running through the whole Bible, through poetry and history, through prophecy and gospel, through epistles and apocalypse, we find this good purpose, the eternal counsels of God for the salvation of man. There is nothing even remotely like it in any of the other religious books. Of itself this marks the Bible out as unique.

From what has been said above, it will be seen that the Old Testament can only be interpreted truly in the light of the New. And the key to explain both is to be found in the life and death of the Christ. He is the central figure and the turning point of the whole revelation, and it is in Him that the true unity consists. When He met the disciples in the upper room after His resurrection He said to them, "These are My words which I spake unto you . . . how that all things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, etc.," and He began at Moses and all the prophets and expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself (Luke xxiv. 44, 45). If we study the Old Testament carefully, bearing this central fact in mind, we shall find that it is transformed for us, and *our* hearts too will "burn within us," as did the hearts of those early disciples. If we attempt to study the Old Testament and refuse the light the Christ offers, we shall grope in darkness like men lost in the windings of some vast underground cave. But when we explore it by the torch provided for us what beauties and treasures sparkle and glitter before our astonished gaze. And the dismal cave proves to be a wondrous cathedral hewn out by no human hands, whose vaults re-echo with the praises of the Christ.

ITS REVELATION OF GOD

So much then for the unity of the Bible. Are there any other features which endorse the claim it makes to be a book

on a level by itself? Surely the religion described both in the Old and the New Testaments is unique. Of Christianity and its claims we will not speak here, but consider the religion which is described in the Old Testament. As we have seen, it is progressive in its nature, but what is remarkable about it is that even in its beginnings it is a pure monotheism. Modern students of comparative religion tell us that religions begin as polytheism and after long ages develop into a monotheistic worship. However that may be (and facts are distinctly against it) here we have even in the earliest days a pure monotheism. When we read the early history of our own race we find that they worshipped trees and groves, that they offered human sacrifices at the sacred wells, that their rites were connected with immoral sacrifices, and that much of their religious energy was taken up with propitiating unfriendly spirits. The same is true of all races except only Israel. But, some one will say, surely modern critics insist that Israel was really no better than her neighbours in this respect. Our answer is that at any rate the Bible does not show it. Here we read that idolatry was forbidden in the earliest code of laws, divinations and necromancy are condemned, and though cases of idol-worship and animism are found here and there these outbreaks are always looked upon with great disfavour by the sacred historians and prophets. It is all the more remarkable that Israel kept her monotheism to the end through all her wanderings, and even when they were surrounded on every hand by tribes who worshipped many gods. We do not deny that there were times in Israel's history when it looked as though monotheism was doomed, but it never disappeared. So in spite of their years of captivity in lands where there were strong and possibly attractive forms of polytheistic worship, although they entered as victors into lands where polytheism held sway, they continued to worship one Jehovah God.

Another feature of the religion of Israel is that it makes God primarily and always a holy God. One need not labour the point. We shall see in a later chapter what kind of gods even highly civilized nations like the Greeks and Romans conceived for themselves; and not only was God holy but He continually shows Himself in His relations to man as anxious that they should be holy too. We read of a holy God making man in His own image, and when man had fallen sadly from that state of grace, constantly seeking to bring him back. The whole history of the Old and New Testament may be summed up as the account of how man by his own choice and will ceased to be

holy, and how he is enabled to regain that lost holiness. Now if we study other sacred writings, or the conception of other religions about their gods, we shall find that they generally divorce morality from religion altogether. The vilest wretch who ever polluted the earth may yet be a good Mohammedan, and according to the creed of Islam entitled to eternal bliss when he dies. Of course some religions regard a sort of holiness as necessary for a select few religious devotees, but it is the religion of the Bible which makes personal morality a supreme concern for all. Speaking on this point, of the indissoluble blending of morality and religion, Orr says, "Where again do we find anything corresponding to this, outside the Biblical revelation? One of the early fathers of the church gives us a description of an Egyptian temple—lofty, spacious, gorgeous, inspiring the worshipper by its grandeur with solemn awe. You enter the precincts of the temple, but when the priest, with grave air, draws aside the veil that hides the inner shrine, you behold, what? A cat, a crocodile, a serpent, or other animal, rolling on a purple couch. Visit now the temple of Jehovah at Jerusalem. Here, too, you have a gorgeous building; here, too, a priesthood, altars, a shrine hidden by a veil. Within the veil stands the ark of the covenant, covered by the mercy-seat, sprinkled with blood of atonement, and shadowed by the golden cherubim. Let that covering be lifted, and within that ark, in the very core and centre of Israel's religion, in its most sacred place you find what? *The two tables of the moral law.*"¹ That is the real difference between the religion of the Old Testament and all others. Once again the unity of Old and New is emphasized when we are told that Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil the law. He Himself declared that upon the double link of love to God and love to one's neighbour hung all the law and the prophets.

THE BREADTH AND DEPTH OF THE BIBLE

Just as a piece of furniture or a painting by a world-famous master may be known to an expert by its likeness to another well-authenticated specimen from the same hand, so we may know the Bible to be a work of God because of its likeness to His handiwork in Nature. We can all distinguish between a real flower and an imitation; an animal is always more wonderful than a toy; a man-made needle is a clumsy weapon compared with the proboscis of a mosquito; the tests of our chemical laboratories are crude indeed in comparison with the chemical testing which goes on every day in what we call our sense of smell, which

¹ *Problem of the Old Testament*, p. 47.

can detect a four-hundred-millionth of a milligramme of mercaptan ! There is in Nature a breadth and a profundity, a perfection of detail, a continually recurring lesson that here is something which we cannot fully understand. And the Bible differs from other books in that here too we find just those same phenomena. It deals with an enormous range of topics and sheds light on them all ; although it evidently aims to be intelligible, the reverent and attentive reader always feels that he soon comes up against insoluble mysteries. As men get older, they are constantly finding fresh light break out to them from the Word ; it becomes dearer every year. The Lord Congleton of a generation or two ago was a man little known in the House of Lords or in public affairs, but he was an earnest Christian ; his biography begins with the striking tribute, " He had eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books was in his hand, the law of truth was written upon his lips, the world was behind his back, and a crown of gold did hang over his head." In one of his letters written at the age of 72, he says, " Of late, I have been almost daily picking up nuggets of a metal far, far more precious than gold, out of the Holy Scriptures." This is such a common experience, that it cannot well be denied. For over 1,800 years these pages have been explored by the wise and learned of many nations, and yet new aspects of truth are from time to time being brought to light and made common property. No other book has such a record.

We are well aware that to some readers neither this nor the wonderful unity of the Book will seem at all impressive. This is simply because they have not taken sufficient time to study it along these lines, or have not done so with a mind free from prejudice. To the educated Englishman nothing seems better proven than the laws of gravitation and the movements of the sun, moon and planets ; he remembers the history of the discovery of Uranus and Neptune, and the accuracy with which eclipses can be predicted ; but it would be quite hopeless to convince a stubborn farm-labourer, unable to read, of these laws if he had some pet theory of his own ; he does not know enough to be argued with.

PROPHECY

Another unique feature about the Bible is the fact of the predictions made by the prophets in its pages, which have been fulfilled. Of course prophecy does not consist wholly or even mainly of foretelling the future, it is a speaking by the help of God. Most of the prophecies relate to the coming of the Messiah and of the Kingdom of God ; we have

already examined some of these (Chapter V). But there are also many predictions, not only of the far distant consummation of the kingdom, but also others which concern themselves with nearer events, with the downfall of the enemies of the kingdom or the intermediate stages in its development. So it is a fair question to ask whether any or all of these prophecies have been fulfilled. This is a good test. The prophets staked their reputation as authorized to speak in the name of the Lord on the coming to pass of their prophecies. It is Jehovah's challenge to the idols, that He by His prophets declares the things that shall come to pass, and they cannot do so. "Declare the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods : yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed" ; "And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it . . . and the things that are coming, and that shall come to pass, let them declare." ¹

Now, at first sight, it looks as though many prophecies had come off, and many others had gone badly astray. Shall we consider the latter class first ? They are found principally in Daniel, in the Revelation, and in the concluding chapters of many of the Old Testament prophets. We have already dealt with the alleged promise of Christ to return in the lifetime of His disciples.

Now, if all these unfulfilled prophecies were separate, and bore no relation to one another, we should have a very difficult case to answer. But if we look into them, we see that they have a great deal in common. The pre-exilic prophets (Amos, Micah, Zephaniah, Isaiah, etc.), all foretell not only the captivity but also the restoration, but a restoration into a prosperity and godliness which never fully came to pass in the days of Zerubbabel and his successors. Ezekiel and the post-exilic prophets enlarge upon this theme, and speak of a still more glorious time before the Jewish nation. It is quite certain that they have never yet enjoyed the wide dominion, peace and prosperity which they were promised by some of the Psalms and the prophets taken all together. Further, David was promised that his seed should sit on the throne for ever ; and the Old Testament incessantly points forward to the advent of a Ruler, a Deliverer, a Messiah. In Joel iii. and Zechariah xii. and xiv. we read of a universal war of the nations against Jerusalem, a siege, and a triumphant deliverance by the personal appearance of the Lord, whose feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives. In Daniel, much of the prophecy has been fulfilled, but there is a certain constant residuum—the ten

¹ Isaiah xli. 21-23 ; xliv. 7, 8 ; xlviii. 3-7 ; Jerem. xxviii. 9.

toes of an image on which a great stone representing the kingdom of the God of heaven shall fall ; the ten horns of the fourth beast (chap. vii.) with a little horn, to be destroyed by the setting up of the kingdom of the Most High ; the abomination of desolation set up by a wicked prince in Daniel ix. 26, 27 and xi. 36-45 with xii. 1.

Now, it looks as if all this has gone badly astray. It would be very rash to hasten to this conclusion, however, because these prophecies which have not been fulfilled are all so definitely related to the setting up of a kingdom of God on earth, which might still be future. And when we turn to the New Testament, we find that the very prophecies of the Old which are unfulfilled are repeated and amplified. Once again the coming of the Lord is foretold, and His universal reign on the earth, and Christ was of the seed of David. He also warned His disciples of a time of great tribulation for Jerusalem and the Jews to be immediately followed by His second Advent (Matt. xxiv. ; Luke xxi. 25-38) ; the siege of Jerusalem by Titus by no means covers the conditions, and indeed, it is carefully distinguished by Luke. Repeatedly in the New Testament the coming of a super-man, the anti-Christ, is referred to (e.g. 2 Thess. ii.), and Nero is no more than a faint foreshadowing of him. In that mysterious book the Apocalypse, our scattered threads are brought together for the last time. A period of three and a half years (42 months, 1,260 days, a time, times and half a time, parallel perhaps to the period of the Lord's public ministry), is mentioned several times, reminding us of the split "week" (literally "seven") of Daniel ix. 27. During this period the Beast is to reign. There is to be a time of terrible persecution of the Jews and other godly folk (Rev. vii. 14, xiii. 7, xvii. 6), and the outpouring of the judgments of God. The ten toes and ten horns of Daniel again appear, and represent ten kingdoms more or less subject to the Beast (Rev. xvii. 12, 13). Finally, heaven is opened, the Word of God comes forth, overthrows His enemies with a great slaughter, and sets up His millennial kingdom. Certainly, all this has never come to pass yet ; though partial and foreshadowing fulfilments there may have been. There is an extraordinary unity, which surely goes to show that in all this, too, there is a true word from God, and if so, it points on to some time yet future. A necessary condition precedent to its fulfilment is the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, also foretold by the old prophets, and this is coming to pass before our eyes. We conclude,

therefore, that we do not find in the Bible a number of isolated and failed prophecies, but a closely-knit unity which will yet find a fulfilment.¹

Turning now to those prophecies which have been fulfilled, we shall find, of course, that the great bulk refer to the coming of the Messiah, and to the future history of the Jews. As we have already said something about these, we shall leave that now, and consider five illustrations of fulfilled prophecy of a different character.

At the end of the thirty-seventh chapter of Isaiah we get the destruction of Sennacherib's army foretold. This speedily came to pass ; even in the same chapter the event is recorded. There are three methods of explaining the oracle, or rather four. The first is to deny the genuineness of both oracle and history. There are certain classes of critics who do so, and are then satisfied that the matter is settled, thus denying the authors concerned the privilege accorded to the common criminal, of being considered innocent until he is proved guilty. It is an easy way out of the difficulty, but scarcely scientific. Then there are those who would assert that the prophecy was written after the event. The critics, however, are agreed for the most part that the earlier chapters of Isaiah at any rate were written about the time of the events here described, so it is not likely that he would have attempted to palm off his prophecy on a credulous people, more especially as the king was so closely concerned in it. Generally speaking, the critics accept the genuineness of the oracle, but like Wellhausen they suggest that Isaiah was a man of great faith, who staked his reputation on God's intervention, and was successful ! As for the further miracle, the destruction of Sennacherib's army, that must be disposed of by declaring that " by a still unexplained catastrophe, the main army of Sennacherib was annihilated on the frontier between Egypt and Palestine." But unfortunately even for this poor explanation, there are other prophecies which cannot be explained away even thus ! To us the fourth method seems the simplest, to take the story as it stands, and acknowledge that Isaiah by divine inspiration prophesied an event which afterwards took place just as he had declared.

The prophet Amos, speaking of the evils which Israel had committed, declared, " Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the Lord " (Amos v. 27).

¹ For beginners in this line of interpretation, a Schofield Bible will be found useful.

Now when this was spoken even the destructive critics are ready to admit that the kings and princes of the people were enjoying every form of luxury, living in careless ease and never dreaming of the fate which two hundred years afterwards was to overtake them and which is here prophesied by the word of the Lord through Amos. But history, sacred and secular, records its fulfilment to the last detail.

In the prophecy of Micah it is declared that "Zion is to be plowed as a field," that "Jerusalem is to become heaps," and the mountain where the Lord's house stood to become "as the high places of a forest" (iii. 12). Again the prophet declares that the daughter of Zion is to go forth out of the city, to dwell in a field, "and thou shalt go even to Babylon," but he adds a promise to his threat, "there shalt thou be delivered; there the Lord shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies" (iv. 10). But it was a century or more before the captivity of Judah that Micah made this declaration. Notice the detailed description which reads almost like history.

The prophecies of Jeremiah belong possibly to the last days of the kingdom of Judah, but it is impossible to explain away the prediction of the seventy years of captivity, "This whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, saith Jehovah, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and I will make it desolate for ever" (Jer. xxv. 11, 12). Now any history book will tell us that Judah was carried away captive to Babylon in 606 B.C. and that they returned from their exile in 536 B.C. So the prophecy was exactly fulfilled.

The book of Daniel has been grievously attacked in modern times. Its own claim is to have been written during the time of the exile, but the advanced critics have insisted on putting it forward to the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. But whatever may be the theory of the date, there are two prophecies in the book which cannot fairly be gainsaid. The first is the marvellous prediction of the Messiah coming and being "cut off, but not for Himself," after sixty-nine weeks (*see* p. 96). And secondly we get a prophecy in the seventh chapter of the rise of four great empires under the similitude of four great beasts. Two of these are interpreted for us in the eighth chapter as the Medo-Persian and the Grecian empires, while the other two have always been interpreted as the Babylonian and Roman empires. If this is so the description of the Roman

empire is marvellously exact ; it was " terrible " and " powerful," it had " great iron teeth," it " devoured and brake in pieces and stamped the residue with its feet " ; " it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it ; and it had ten horns " (Dan. vii. 7).

Now the destructive critics, in order presumably to get rid of the miraculous element, have declared that the book is a late forgery ; and yet even in this case there is the difficulty of the Roman empire prophecy which would still be a prediction. So they are forced into interpreting the four kingdoms into the Babylonian, Median, Persian and Greek.

There are other explanations, but this is the favourite. But it is quite impossible. As a matter of historical fact there never was a separate Median empire as a great world-power. Daniel himself never says so ; he always speaks of the Medo-Persian empire as one. The vision itself bears evident tokens that the Bear is the Medo-Persian empire in that it expressly says that it raised itself up on one side, i.e. the Persian dominated the Median ; the three ribs may denote its conquests—Babylonia, Lydia, etc. The Greek empire of Alexander the Great split into four after his death, Greece, Asia Minor with Syria, Egypt, and the East ; this is directly stated in Daniel viii. 22, 23. There can be no doubt then that the leopard, with its wings representing Alexander's meteoric career of victory, and its four heads, means the Grecian world-empire. If so the fourth beast must be Rome. Verse 8 makes it impossible to fit it in as Antiochus Epiphanes ; besides, he never had a world-empire like the others. (In our view, of course, verse 8 is future, as explained above.) All other explanations than the true one, which has always been accepted from the earliest times, are obviously forced for the sake of a theory, and have degenerated into subterfuges. But modern research is all tending to point to the earlier date of the book, and we believe there can be little doubt about its authenticity ; as our knowledge of Babylonian history increases it will not be very long before the critics will be left high and dry by the receding tide, stranded once more upon the sand of their own theories.

These are but a few illustrations of the wonderful prophecies to be found in the Old Testament. We might have considered the prophecies about the various nations, such as that of Nahum against Nineveh, or the prophecies against Egypt, Babylon, Tyre, and other surrounding kingdoms, but these will suffice. Nor need we confine ourselves to the Old Testament, for in the New Testament too we have many, of which

we will instance but one. In Luke xxi. 20-24 we get a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, which was fulfilled with literal precision in A.D. 70, when Titus besieged Jerusalem, "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke xxi. 24).

Here then is a mass of prediction which of itself would mark this Book as unique. How are we to explain it? We know of no other way except by declaring the Bible to be what it claims to be, the inspired Word of our God to whom the future is not hid, given through the medium of His servants the prophets. "For they . . . stay themselves upon the God of Israel; the Lord of Hosts is His Name. I have declared the former things from of old, yea, they went forth out of my mouth . . . suddenly I did them and they came to pass. . . . Before it came to pass I shewed it thee, lest thou should say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image and my molten image hath commanded them. Thou hast heard it; behold all this; . . . will ye not declare it? I have shewed thee new things from this time, even hidden things which thou hast not known" (Isa. xlviii. 2-6).

THE MORAL POWER OF THE BOOK

We have reviewed some of the internal endorsements of the Bible's claims; let us now consider some which are more definitely external. What sort of influence has this book had upon individuals and upon nations? Now first of all, it is always dangerous to make sweeping assertions, but it is surely not too much to say that the study of the Bible has always been and is still connected with the class of people who are God-fearing and law-abiding. For instance we do not connect the study of the Bible with the criminal classes who fill our gaols, or with the frivolous or immoral who frequent our divorce courts and spend their lifetime in seeking for some new craze. There is a story told of two travellers who arrived one wild night in a rough settlement in some back block of Western America. They put up with one of the settlers, and when they had retired to the room allotted to them, one arranged to keep watch while the other slept. About midnight the sleeper awoke and to his amazement found that his companion had given up his task of watching and was lying asleep on his bed. His friend awoke him to ask the reason, and then the other described how as he was peering through a crack in the boards

he saw the old settler take down a family Bible, read a portion of it aloud, and then engage in prayer. The traveller had no further qualms about his landlord's honesty, and lay down to sleep quite satisfied.

The Bible has had a wonderful influence over the lives of countless generations of men. There are many authentic instances of lives absolutely changed by it. Several such anecdotes are related later in the book. Savage tribes have been civilized by its teachings and head-hunters transformed into saints of God. Several instances are known in which the chance introduction of a Bible into a community has resulted in a moral reformation quite apart from the presence and teaching of a missionary.

To quote one instance : the inhabitants of a village on the banks of the Irtish, a tributary of the Obi in Siberia, though nominally members of the Orthodox Greek Church, were a drunken, foul-mouthed, immoral set, like the people of the neighbouring villages, but one young man was sent away to fight in the Russo-Japanese war, and there met with an earnest Bible-loving Christian soldier, through whom he was converted. He took home with him a copy of the New Testament, and through the reading of this one book the moral tone of the whole community was changed. Although there was great opposition at first, gradually the message did its work, and after a while, without any outside help, there grew up a Church of 140 believers, and the old drunkenness, bad language, immorality and dishonesty disappeared, so that the village stood in astonishing contrast to its neighbours as a light in a dark place.¹

Another testimony to the moral power of the Bible is the thorough-going hatred which it has inspired in the breasts of persons leading wicked lives. Everybody knows something of the efforts which they have made in the past to put it out of existence, by burning, by cruelty, and by every other means. The hatred is not dead yet ; in any haunt of wickedness in England to-day if anyone started to read aloud a chapter of that Book, he might be pretty sure of opposition.

A simple and conclusive evidence of the moral value of the Bible is furnished by the experience of countries which have banished it at various periods from the schools. There lies before us, as we write, an article in the *Daily Mail* for April 26, 1906, setting forth the evil consequences of this policy in

¹ The facts are vouched for by our friend Mr. E. Hamer Broadbent, who visited the village himself.

Australia, America, and France. In Victoria, within ten years of the exclusion of the Bible from the schools, crime advanced by leaps and bounds. The male criminals in 1880 were 12,469, in 1890 there were 20,189. Yet there was plenty of education; 99.56 per cent. of the population were being educated. In America the presidents of Harvard, Clark and Chicago Universities bore testimony that the results of eliminating the Bible had been disastrous to morals. Crime steadily increased; out of the ten thousand boys in Denver, 2,000 had been in gaol. In France, M. Mace, chief of the Paris Police Force, wrote that young criminals were springing up like weeds between the cracks of the pavement, and continued, "The philosophers must, if they are conscientious, confess that our modern education has not been without disastrous effects on the masses. The materialistic school is rapidly gaining ground, and the intelligence cultivated at the expense of the heart is producing startling results."¹

It is told that when a certain prince from a far-off land asked Queen Victoria the secret of England's greatness, she told him that it was the fact of an open Bible. It is interesting in this connection to compare those countries where the Bible has been circulated, read and studied, with lands where its study has been forbidden, and where often it has been condemned as an unlawful book and even burned. Consider the difference between North and South America. North America the land of freedom and progress, South America until lately the land of gross immorality, backward, with a large illiterate population, and one or other of its states usually in the pangs of a revolution. In the South the Roman Catholic Church, following her historic attitude to the Bible, has put a ban upon its study by the laity.¹ Nowadays, however, some of the South American Republics seem to be awaking to a fresh lease of life, and it is interesting to note that the new President of the Chili Republic declared that the Bible was to be his guide, and that he would know how to appreciate its true worth.² It is also instructive to notice the moral and social difference between the Protestant and Roman Catholic cantons of Switzerland.

Lastly, we read in the 117th annual report of the British and Foreign Bible Society that Soviet Russia remains barred

¹ *The Roman Catholic Church and the Bible*, p. 24, by G. C. Coulton. The writer is one of the greatest living mediaevalists, and is interested in the question purely from the historical point of view. See also *The Lollard Bible*, by Miss Deanesly, pp. 382-4.

² *The Christian*, p. 30, Sept. 22, 1921.

against imports of the Scriptures. The reader himself can doubtless supply other instances of the same thing.

Surely this is a remarkable fact which needs to be accounted for. According to the laws of inductive logic, when we see two phenomena varying constantly together we have strong reasons for assuming that the two are connected as cause and effect.

THE PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES OF INSPIRATION

But someone will say, granting that all this is true, yet there are many difficulties which face the ordinary reader of the Bible who believes, or wishes to believe, that the very words of Scripture are the direct result of inspiration. In the first place, often in the gospel narratives, we find that the same incident is differently recorded by two evangelists. Thus, when our Lord was baptized, we read that a voice was heard from heaven saying in Mark i. 11 (R.V.), "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased," but in Matthew iii. 17, it is reported to have said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." What did the voice actually say? and if the words of the writers were inspired, why do they not give the exact and of course identical words in each case? Or again, some one may say, how is it that quotations are often given from the Old Testament which are by no means verbatim, while the quotations are once or twice attributed to the wrong author? Thus, for instance, in Mark i., verse 2, we read, "Even as it is written in Isaiah the prophet, 'Behold I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord. Make His paths straight.' " The first of these is quoted from Malachi iii. 1, and reads, "Behold I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me," while the other is from Isaiah xl. 3, and reads, "The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God." Now here we get the evangelist apparently attributing to Isaiah a quotation which is actually in Malachi, and furthermore we get the quotations themselves which are not exactly as we have them in the Old Testament. "Again," says our interrogator, "there are apparently mistakes in the facts of history; thus in the account of Saul's death we read (1) he killed himself (1 Sam. xxxi. 4), (2) an Amalekite killed him (2 Sam. i. 10), (3) the Philistines slew him (2 Sam. xxi. 12).

How are we to account for these variations if every word of Scripture is the inspired word of God ? ”

Now in dealing with all these putative mistakes in Scripture great care must be exercised. In the first place, seeing that it is a book which claims to be written by God, our treatment of it will be reverent and restrained, because the Christian realizes that one day he will stand before the judgment seat of the Author of that book, and He will surely hold it a crime if we have carelessly and airily tinkered away at the book He wrote.

The explanation must not be overworked, but it is quite certain that many of the more obvious difficulties and discrepancies between parallel narratives are due to copyists' errors, which also account for the occasional quite unintelligible sentences met with in the Old Testament. Before the introduction of printing, of course, books had to be copied by hand, and errors were almost bound to creep in. But the text of Scripture was so revered that the most extraordinary care was usually taken to secure accuracy ; the Massorettes used to count the very letters of the Hebrew manuscripts and reject all those with mistakes. In the New Testament, so great is the variety and antiquity of our authorities for the text, and so well do they agree in the main, that there is very little room for copyists' errors to go undetected. In the Old Testament the obscure and contradictory passages are more numerous, as might be expected from the enormous antiquity of the text, the paucity of really ancient manuscripts, versions and quotations, and the very close resemblances between some different letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The method of expressing numbers by letters and dots accounts for many of the numerical puzzles, which are often older than the Septuagint translation. It speaks volumes for the reverent care taken in the transmission of the text that these obvious mistakes have been handed down uncorrected from a period at least a hundred years before Christ came. One may obtain some idea of the slightness of the amount of copyist's errors by comparing the identical passages in Samuel and in Chronicles. They are most seen in personal names and in figures. Probable examples are 1 Samuel xiii. 1, "Saul was a year old when he began to reign" (so the Hebrew) ; and Nehemiah iv. 23.

However, the amount of copyists' mistakes in the Bible is nothing like sufficient to explain all the difficulties. We shall not make them responsible, for instance, for any of the three raised by our interrogator just above. These represent three different classes of difficulty.

Let us for a moment consider them. *The first class* consists of apparent or real discrepancies between the gospels. The fair critic will approach these difficulties with no desire to create them, but candidly facing the facts to solve them if it is at all possible. But even if he cannot solve all of them, surely the fact that such apparent discrepancies exist is one of the most striking proofs of the genuineness of the accounts themselves. Four writers give four different pictures of our Lord from four different points of view. The result is that one great and glorious picture is harmoniously painted. If they had been forgeries we may be sure that there would have been no discrepancies between them. We must, however, bear two facts in mind—similar incidents must never be too hastily assumed to be the same. Thus we cannot identify the anointing of our Lord by a woman who was a sinner (Luke vii. 36), and that at Bethany by Mary the sister of Lazarus in Matthew xxvi. 6. Secondly, it is highly probable that He repeated most of His important sayings many times over, with more or less variation to different audiences. So if reports of the sayings of our Lord differ it is very unfair to treat them as discrepancies, as for the most part the German critics do. A good instance of this is the denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees as uttered during the journey to Jerusalem (Luke xi. 37) and their public repetition in Jerusalem at the end of our Lord's ministry (Matt. xxiii.). But when all this is said there is still a margin left over, as in the example supplied by our questioner. Such trifling variations occur in the same speeches here and there, and since, as a matter of fact, these speeches of our Lord are not in the language in which He spoke them, i.e. Aramaic, but in a Greek translation, we can see plainly that the writer was not given a verbatim report of what was actually spoken, but what a veracious listener of truthful memory would correctly render of a speech which he had heard. Any mistake implying falsehood would, of course, be contrary to the claims of the Bible, but variations which do not materially alter the sense and are merely connected with the personality of the writer or listener seem to be admitted. Often such variations are valuable, as presenting two aspects of a truth.

The second class of difficulty is that connected with quotations from the Old Testament. Here again we have to remember first of all that the New Testament writers sometimes quoted from the Septuagint translation, sometimes from the Hebrew text. Occasionally the variations we see are nothing more

than the variations of our English translation of these differing texts. The Hebrew text which was in the hands of the New Testament writers was probably better than that used by our Authorized Version translators, so that occasionally a New Testament quotation enables us to correct the text of the Old Testament as we have it.¹ This accounts for some variations, but it looks very much sometimes as though the Holy Spirit Who inspired the writers of the New Testament Scriptures is giving them a fresh revelation with regard to the meaning of the passage, and they are rather paraphrasing than quoting, under the direction of the Holy Spirit (cf. Psalm xxxii. 1, 2, and Romans iv. 6-8). With regard to the ascription of the quotation to Isaiah, we may point out that in some important manuscripts the name Isaiah does not appear. Nevertheless, the weight of evidence is on the side of the "Isaiah," but as Matthew Henry says in connection with a similar passage (Matt. xxvii. 10), "the credit of Christ's doctrine doth not depend upon it; for that proves itself perfectly divine, though there should appear something human as to small circumstances in the penmen of it."

The third class of difficulty is that connected with various apparent contradictions of historical fact. Now these, too, are often easily explained by a more careful reading of the sacred text. Take, for instance, the one in question. It looks as if the Amalekite in 2 Samuel 1, was merely telling a lie in order to gain a reward, and that inasmuch as Saul was wounded and fell in battle it was virtually true, though not stated in terms of exact precision, that the Philistines slew him.

All these facts lead us on then to re-assert most strongly that God is the Author of this book, but, on the other hand, man is the author, too. God is the primary Author, but He uses man as his instrument. Consequently the individuality of the inspired writers is seen in their writings. The style of Luke is not that of Paul; it is as though a man blew through various instruments; the note produced by the bugle is entirely different from that produced by the trombone; but it is the same musician who blows through each. God chose His instruments in His eternal purposes, and as such they were specially gifted for the work they had to do. Therefore the individuality is never crushed. One of the most striking facts in the whole of the Bible is the individual colouring of each book combined with the unity of purpose of the whole.

¹ Compare for instance Hab. i. 5 with Acts xiii. 41, and Isaiah xxix. 13 with Matt. xv. 8, 9.

God could have overridden all imperfections of style, but He did not. It is very interesting in this connection to notice the human touches in the Pauline epistles; he tells the Corinthians, "I baptized none of you save Crispus and Gaius," then two verses later recollects that he baptized also the household of Stephanas; writing to the Philippians, like many a modern preacher he comes out with a "finally" when barely half-way through, and another long before the end! How much more affecting is the conflict described in his seventh chapter to the Romans, when we can believe that he is not arguing an imaginary case, but is giving us a little bit of his own agonizing experience! Again and again in his writings the grammar goes astray or a sentence is left incomplete as he is swept along by the eagerness of his spirit. Are we to regard it as unworthy of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost that the Greek should sometimes be faulty?

It seems to be a law of God that even when He miraculously intervenes in the laws of nature, He allows man to do what he is humanly able to do. Man may dig the ditches, but it is God Who fills them with water; man may even hew the tables of stone, but it is God Who imprints upon them the words of the law.¹ In the same way in the inspired records we read how Luke as a result of the most careful study of existing materials drew up the gospel story.² In the historical books, too, we find that uninspired documents were used, such as the Book of the Wars of the Lord (Num. xxi. 14), the Book of Jasher (Joshua x. 13), the Book of Nathan the Prophet (1 Chron. xxix. 29). No less than twelve such sources are mentioned in Chronicles.³ We find that genealogies are used which are sometimes defective, and contain gaps, names and even numbers having been corrupted.³ Thus it appears that those matters which the writers could find out for themselves were not miraculously supplied to them. Inspiration worked on the materials gathered, not necessarily supplying gaps or correcting copyists' errors, but inaccuracy as far as it implies any elements of untruth is utterly excluded; but such imperfections and lack of completeness as may arise from the imperfection of the instrument may be found occasionally. Inspiration does not always create the materials of its record, but it works on them. It reveals itself rather in the insight it shows into them and in the use it makes of them. Thus Matthew Henry, commenting on 1 Chron. viii.

¹ 2 Kings iii. 16-18, Exodus xxxiv. 4.

² Luke i. 1-4 (R.V.).

³ 1 Chron. iv. 22—"And the records are ancient."

1-32, says: "As to the difficulties that occur in this and the foregoing genealogies we need not perplex ourselves. I presume Ezra took them as he found them in the Books of the Kings of Israel and Judah (ch. ix. 1), according as they were given in by the several tribes, each observing what method they thought fit. Hence, some *ascend* and others *descend*; some have numbers affixed, other places; some have historical remarks intermixed, others have not; some are shorter, others longer; some agree with all other records, others differ; some it is likely were torn, erased and blotted, others more legible. Those of Dan and Reuben were entirely lost. This holy man wrote as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, but there was no necessity for the making up of the defects, no, nor for the rectifying of the mistakes of these genealogies by inspiration. It was sufficient that he copied them out as they came to hand, or so much of them as was requisite." Does not this let in a loophole for serious error—is it not contradictory to the teaching of Scripture that every word is inspired? No, we reply, for God is immediately responsible for, and acknowledges as His own, the whole of the Scriptures and every word of it so that we do not believe that any words or sentences found their way into the sacred text as it left the writer's hands which were uninspired or merely human.

We must remember that God in His word has used various forms of literary composition. He has inspired poetry in the Psalms and in the Book of Job. The latter is in metrical lines almost throughout. It does not necessarily follow that Job sat on his dunghill and repeated several thousand verses of poetry, while his friends answered him in equally elaborate metre; the poetic form may be due to the recorder. It is poetry, and we must interpret it as we usually interpret poetry. He has inspired historical writings, too, and some of the stormiest battles have been fought around these. If the book is inspired by God as it claims to be, surely we cannot believe that God would inspire a careless generally inaccurate historian, a mythmonger or a forger. Many modern critics would say Yes; we answer confidently No!

Much has been already said about the historicity of certain parts of the Bible; let us, therefore, consider the book whose historical *bona-fides* have been most violently attacked in recent years, the Book of Daniel. It purports to have been written between 606 and 534 B.C. Sweeping attacks, however, have been made on it by the higher critics, who point out that the language of the book does not bear out this early

date. For this and other reasons they assign it to somewhere about 165 B.C. It would then be a late forgery of some faithful Chasid in the days of the Seleucid tyrant; the history will probably be hopelessly inaccurate and the predictions become mere prophecies after the event. Let us consider first the theory based on language. Prof. Driver declares, for instance, that "the Persian words contained in Daniel presuppose, the Greek words demand, the Hebrew supports and the Aramaic permits, a date after the conquest of Palestine by Alexander the Great" (332 B.C.). There are three Greek words in Daniel, all the names of musical instruments. But the study of archæology tells us in no uncertain terms that there were the strongest bonds between Greece and the East all through what is known as the Ionic period of ancient Greek art (800-480 B.C.). On pottery and metal work we get an increasing number of Eastern motives such as the palmette, the lotus, panthers and lions, mingled with the mythical faun, the sphinx, the griffin, and the harpy and other equally Oriental designs. This is sufficient to prove without the shadow of a doubt a strong artistic connection between Greece and the East long before the days of Daniel. So the theory that Greek words are out of place in a manuscript of the seventh century falls at once to the ground.

In some Aramaic papyri lately discovered in Egypt, dated 494 B.C. and after (i.e., only forty years after the time of Cyrus), there are several Greek words, indicating a coin, a colour, and an article of dress. These papyri also contain many Persian words, and so does the Aramaic portion of Ezra, which is allowed to be contemporaneous. The grammar of these Aramaic documents also agrees with that of Daniel. In fact, so far as the argument from language goes it is now in favour of the authenticity of the book; the proper names are real Babylonian, the paucity of Greek words seems to point to a date before the conquests of Alexander the Great, and by the time that the Septuagint translation came to be made four or five words were so obsolete that their meaning was lost.¹

What more particularly concerns us just now, however, is the question as to whether the history of the book of Daniel is at fault. It is the fifth chapter which is regarded as the most obviously unhistorical section in the Old Testament. Even Professor Sayce, who is usually against the advanced critics,

¹ W. St. Clair Tisdall, *Jour. Trans. Victoria Institute*, liii., 1921, p. 246.

frankly gave up this chapter, and as we may say flung it to the lions. Well, never mind, perhaps they may find it, like its writer, too much for them !

The errors which have been alleged against it are :—

(i) There was no such person as Belshazzar known to secular history.

(ii) The last king of Babylon was Nabonidus, who was not a descendant of Nebuchadnezzar, and was not killed in Babylon, but taken prisoner.

(iii) There was no siege of Babylon, no assault, and no ruler was slain.

(iv) History does not know any Darius the Mede ; Cyrus himself was the new ruler.

All this looks very formidable, no doubt, but let us examine into it. Our authorities are, first, the long-known Greek histories, by Xenophon and Herodotus, which do not mention Belshazzar, but describe the taking of Babylon by Cyrus, who is said to have diverted the waters of the Euphrates so that his soldiers could enter by the river-bed, and the king was slain. Secondly, the Annalistic Tablet of Cyrus, found in 1880. This does mention Belshazzar by name, tells how Nabonidus, the king and Belshazzar's father, was taken prisoner in Babylon without fighting, that three months later Cyrus entered Babylon, that Gobryas was made governor, and that eight days later he made a night assault (?) and the king's son was slain (?). The tablet is broken at the end, and the last few words are not quite certain. New evidence has come to light to reinforce this ; some merchants' contract tablets for that year have been found, which show that even up to the 10th of Marchesvan, the very day before the king's son was slain, Nabonidus was regarded as still king. There is another contract tablet in the British Museum, dated 24th of Marchesvan in the Accession year of Cyrus. Finally, a fragment of the history of Berosus is preserved by Josephus.

The clue to the riddle seems¹ to be that Babylon is now known from excavations to have been in two parts, separated by the Euphrates ; the king's palace was on the eastern side. Evidently, putting all our information together, Gobryas entered the western part of the city without fighting, and finding Nabonidus there took him prisoner ; Belshazzar still held out in the eastern parts of the city for three months, and the merchants still dated their tablets as in the seventeenth year of Nabonidus. His father being a prisoner, Belshazzar

¹ Robinson : *Journ. of Trans. Victoria Institute*, 1914, p. 9.

was virtually king. During those three months the Persians were digging to divert the river; then Cyrus came, and on the night of the 11th of Marchesvan, whilst Belshazzar's feast was in progress, the enemy was wading in through the now shallow waters, and he was found standing sword in hand in the palace hall, and was slain. The governorship was deputed by Cyrus to Gobryas, or possibly to Cyaxeres, a Median of royal blood. One or other of these must be Darius. It now becomes clear why Belshazzar could only reward Daniel by making him the *third* ruler, he himself being only second. Why he is called the "son" of Nebuchadnezzar we do not know, but it is at least a possibility that the influential queen who figures in Daniel may have been daughter to Nebuchadnezzar and mother of Belshazzar, having married Nabonidus. Thus, after all, the book seems to be more accurate than the critics.

THE MORAL DIFFICULTIES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

But if these writings are truly the Word of God, how are we to account for the passages in the Old Testament which appear to be so utterly opposed to our modern ideas of morality? Consider, for instance, the blood-thirsty wars of Israel, the destruction of the Canaanites by the command of God, and the Psalms in which curses are hurled at the heads of the enemies of Israel. Or consider the low hedonistic philosophy of the writer of Ecclesiastes. Surely God did not inspire men to write such words or to do such deeds as come with a shock to us as we read them?

First of all, in order to answer this question we must realize that God sometimes by inspiration allowed a man to reveal the state of his own heart. Thus the book of Ecclesiastes is a faithful account of the workings of the mind of a man who looked only at the affairs of this life, wilfully neglecting God and the hereafter. The result is that we get a picture of an agnostic who lives entirely for pleasure; the sorrowful and devious course of his philosophy is traced through all its mordant pessimism to its conclusion in the last verses, "This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard; fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment with every hidden thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil" (Eccles. xii. 13, 14, R.V.). The words and works of the Preacher are tried and found wanting! In the same way Job's friends reveal by inspiration the thought of their hearts, and here

God Himself condemns them, " My wrath is kindled against thee and against thy two friends ; for ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right " (Job xlii. 7.).

But what shall we say when, as in the command to exterminate the Canaanites or in the Psalms, God Himself is apparently implicated in this lower morality ? The morality of man may be expected to progress, but we naturally imagine that the morality presented by God would be the same throughout. Difficulties exist, but there is no need to exaggerate them as the critics are inclined to do. A careful comparison of Old Testament history with contemporary secular history as far as we know it—and our knowledge is increasing by leaps and bounds—will show that the standard of morality amongst the Hebrews was unique. Take, for instance, their attitude to women. The Mosaic law, which was as it were the lowest common denominator of the morality of the nation as a whole, is stern and uncompromising in its punishment of the violation of female virtue (Exodus xxi. 7 ; Deut. xxii. 13-27, etc.). It treats even captive women with respect (Deut. xxi. 10-14), and especially it declares as abominable the prostitution of women in the sanctuary (Deut. xxiii. 17).

But we shall often observe that even when apparently harsh measures are used, it is in the interests of law and order. Thus the Canaanites are destroyed not for false belief but for vile actions (Gen. xv. 16 ; Lev. xviii. 24 ; Deut. xii. 29-31). The Israelites did not enter their country until their wickedness had reached such a pitch that their destruction would be felt to be a just doom. But further, God did not by any means always give His approval, as a closer consideration of some of these difficult passages proves. Thus David was not allowed to build the temple because of the merciless wars in which he had engaged (1 Chron. xxii. 8). It was Abraham again who sent Hagar away into the desert at the instigation of his wife, presumably to die ; although the Lord allowed it, Hagar had abundant provision made for her by God.

The whole question has been summarized by Orr. He points out that there is in the first place the general difficulty of the relation of God to evil, a difficulty which is as urgent in philosophy as in theology and equally insoluble. But then there are three main lines along which the revelation of God works. In the first place, revelation takes man up at the stage at which it finds him. Man would not be able to understand the revelation if it had no point of contact with his own circumstances. Granted that this is so, then, secondly,

revelation is only responsible for the new element which it introduces. The Spirit came upon such prophets as Jephthah and Deborah, but they still possessed an outlook on life which a more advanced morality condemns. This, too, is true of certain of the imprecatory psalms. Then, thirdly, revelation lays hold on the better elements in the state of mind of its recipients and brings them forward so as to overcome the imperfections. Thus when Abraham was told to sacrifice Isaac, there was implied the background of human sacrifice as it was probably common amongst the peoples of Abraham's time. But God taught Abraham the lesson of the surrender of his dearest and best, and at the same time condemned this hateful heathen rite. Most of the difficulties of this kind disappear when we remember that in the Old Testament stages of the progressive revelation of God, He was revealing Himself to the world primarily as a God of justice. So where there is enmity to God or antagonism to His cause, we find uncompromising hostility in the Old Testament, and this is the true explanation of most of the imprecatory psalms. The curses are directed not against the author's personal enemies, but against the enemies of God. When Christ came God was revealed as the All-loving, too.

Further, it should be remembered that morality is not an absolutely fixed quantity quite irrespective of the degree of education, or of circumstances. What may be right, or at least not wrong, in a child or an Old Testament character, may be definitely wrong in an adult or a modern Christian. No one blames a baby for crying when hurt, but it is not an admirable action in a man. It may be proper to hang a murderer after a fair trial, but that does not imply the right of private vengeance. So bigamy is wrong now, but that does not prove that it was equally blameworthy in Abraham; to pray for God's judgment on one's private enemies is wrong now, but it may not have been wrong for David, and anyhow it was a great moral advance to do that rather than to settle the matter with a cudgel.

And yet again, a man might speak by Inspiration, and yet the spirit in which he uttered the words might be egregiously wrong. Caiaphas spoke a true and significant sentence when he said, "not of himself, but being high priest that year, he prophesied," that it was expedient that one man should die for the nation (John xi. 49-51).

So at last we reach the conclusion of the whole matter. God has inspired His chosen servants to give us an inspired

Word. He has so guarded the instrument chosen and its executive faculties, the eye, the hand, the ear, the memory, that no error could creep in. The result is a book which differs in inspiration from all other books. Some one has said that Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* has been of far more spiritual help to many people than the book of Chronicles. It may be; but the book of Chronicles is part of the official revelation of God, and its inspiration is there not different in degree, but different in kind from that of all other good, uplifting, and holy books which have been produced throughout the ages. That book is the final and inerrant authority on all matters of faith, doctrine and prophecy.

Finally, we would say to all those who have been troubled with difficulties, Do not give up your belief in the full inspiration of God's Word because you are not able to decide what is the exact degree of grammatical accuracy involved, how far all quotations ought to be verbatim, or what amount of precision of historical accuracy is required. Too often the battle has raged over the meaning of phrases such as "verbal inspiration," "plenary inspiration" and so forth. It is not a question of words, but of an actual living reality. We would urge at the end as we urged at the beginning of this chapter, that the only satisfactory way to settle difficulties of inspiration which we may have is to go to the Bible itself, and putting aside all our own or other people's preconceived ideas, to study the claims which the Bible makes for itself, and to demand of it no more and no less. On the divine side this is summed up in "All Scripture is God-breathed." On the human side, "It seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee."

CHAPTER VIII

Truth will Conquer

IT was once declared by a wise Rabbi, face to face with a new movement which was turning Jerusalem upside down, that if it was of God it could not be overthrown.¹ He saw that there was more beneath the surface of these troubles than some of his brother Rabbis suspected. Had he known all, he might have been far surer that it was not a trouble that could be settled in a few days by the punishment of the ringleaders and the intimidation of converts, prospective or actual. Here were a few timid, helpless disciples of whom the boldest had but recently denied his Lord with cursing and swearing. They were poor and ignorant. Most of them could not speak without betraying themselves by their mongrel dialect. For what they had to say concerning the crucifixion and resurrection of a Galilean peasant their hearers had nothing but disgust and scorn. And yet, in spite of this, on the day of Pentecost 3,000 souls were added to the Church. If Gamaliel had known all, with good reason might he have declared that the best policy was to leave these men alone lest haply he and his brethren might be found to be fighting against God. But how impossible it must have seemed at the time, that this tiny and insignificant sect could make any headway against the powers that opposed it. Like David, the youthful Church went forth to fight not one but many Goliaths. There was the Goliath of Judaism, the Judaism which had held fast to its gorgeous worship and holy faith for fifteen hundred years. They looked back to the day when God had given them the law upon the holy mount—back still farther to the promise granted to Abraham as he listened in awe to the voice of God which echoed through the majestic silence of the Eastern night. All the wonders of the tabernacle in the wilderness, the glories of the Temple

¹ Acts v. 33-42.

of Solomon were sacred memories ; the heroism of the national patriots, the sweet songs of their psalmists, the thunders of their prophets all seemed to bid them cry out against the unnatural claims made by a few miserable Galileans and their crucified Nazarene whose teachings the Pharisees condemned. Then there was the Goliath of Paganism. Of the strength of that giant we can have little conception to-day. The religion of both the Greeks and the Romans was essentially national. To deny the gods was to undermine the very foundation of national life ; hence the necessity for persecution, argued the philosophers and rulers of the day. Bearing this fact in mind, let us for a little while consider the state of the Roman world into which the gospel was first launched.

Among the many criticisms which were levelled against Christianity during last century, one of the most frequently met with among literary and artistic critics was that Christianity had taken much of the joy out of life. Thus Swinburne declared :—

“ Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean,
The world has grown grey with Thy breath ! ” ¹

That the early Church did not look upon the Christ as a pale Galilean the art of the catacombs sufficiently proves. If any further proof were needed, we have it in the criticism of His foes to whom He appeared to be “ a gluttonous man and a wine bibber,” and in the fact that the words most often on His lips were “ Be of good cheer.”

But can it be shown that the coming of Christianity has led to sorrow and unhappiness or, at any rate, the disappearance of that unfettered happiness which we sometimes associate with the idyllic pictures painted for us by the—

“ Poet of the happy Tityrus
Piping underneath his beechen bowers
Poet of the poet-satyr
Whom the laughing shepherds bound with flowers ” ? ²

It is an easy matter to read of a state of affairs idealized by the poets of the period and to forget the dark and gloomy background. History provides us with what we require in this particular. Thus Paul draws a picture of the moral state of heathenism in Romans i., and in his frequently recurring catalogue of fornicators, and idolaters, and adulterers, and effeminate, and abusers of themselves with mankind,

¹ “ The Hymn to Proserpine.”

² Tennyson, “ To Virgil.”

and thieves and covetous and drunkards and revilers and extortioners—"and such were some of you" (1 Cor. vi. 9-11). But heathen writers paint the scene in just the same colours. Seneca speaks of Rome as a cesspool of iniquity.¹ Juvenal describes her as a filthy sewer "into which have flowed the abominable dregs of every Achæan and Syrian stream."²

We do not need merely to accept the exaggerated pictures of the satirists whose business it was to paint their country and their times in the blackest colours. We have the calm unbiassed references—all the more telling because they are so often casual—of the historian and the philosopher. If we need more we have the museums. Archæology provides us with still more damning evidence. Nothing could be more convincing than a visit to the Museum at Naples, followed by a careful study of the ruins of Pompeii.

Rome then was a great city, mistress of the world; the ruins of her wonderful marble temples, palaces and baths still draw thousands of visitors from every part of the globe. During the first century of the Christian era she had probably reached the highest point in her civilization.

According to Mommsen, she had in the first century a population of 1,610,000. Of these, 10,000 were senators and knights, 60,000 foreigners, 20,000 garrison, 320,000 free citizens, 300,000 women and children, and 900,000 slaves. That is to say, about three-fifths of her population consisted of chattels who might be brutally ill-treated and no one could interfere. So we read of a certain Flaminius who, when a young friend said that he had never seen a man in a death agony, ordered a slave to be killed for his benefit. Or, again, there was a man named Pollio who, in order to cultivate delicate lampreys, fed them with his slaves. Of those 900,000 slaves not one knew when he awoke in the morning whether it might not be his lot that day to face death in the most horrible and brutal form. Surely for three-fifths of the population of Rome the aspect of life must have been "grey" enough in all conscience!

It has been pointed out by a modern writer that "the character of an age is given by the treatment of criminals, and that age was characterized by Crucifixion."³ Seeing that slaves were in so great a majority it was necessary for them to be kept under by fear; so the Romans invented this most horrible form of death: the victim was nailed to the cross on

¹ Seneca, *De Ira*, ii. 8.

² Juvenal, *Sat.*, iii. 62.

³ Glover, *The Jesus of History*, p. 67.

the ground—the cross was then lifted up, causing him the most horrible suffering, and he was left to rot in the scorching sun, cruelly tormented by the flies, while the crows gathered around to fasten upon the dying wretch almost before the life was out of his body. The hardness of heart which tolerated this abominable cruelty can scarcely be imagined. And yet one can understand to some extent how strongly they felt that this must be. “The slave was forced almost into being degenerate by his very position—he became a thief, a liar, dirty and bad; and with the woman it was still worse. The slave woman was a little lower than the animal; she might not have offspring. It was ‘natural’; men said, ‘Nature had designed certain races to be slaves; slavery was written in Nature; it was Nature’s law.’ These were not the thoughts of vulgar people, but of some of the best of the Greeks—not of all, indeed; but society was organized on the basis of slavery. It was an accepted axiom of all social and economic life.”¹

But slavery necessarily meant that wealth was in the hands of the few; and such was decidedly the case in Rome. There were 320,000 free citizens not one of whom would dream of soiling his hands by labour. How was he to live? There was for most of them only one way. They were practically maintained by the State. Bread had to be provided for them and they lived a life of idleness. At any rate, it would have been better if they had been idle, for the occupations of most of these free-men were such as would rarely bear the light of day. Idle men are seldom happy men, and these 320,000 idlers must have found life grey, too.

But besides bread, the emperors soon found that they must provide amusements for these restless crowds. So in every Roman city we find an amphitheatre. Here, gladiators fought to the death and men, women and children watched two men, or sometimes more, slay one another. Sometimes a gladiator, exhausted with fatigue and loss of blood, held up his finger to show he had recourse to the mercy of the spectators: then often the vast Coliseum with its 90,000 spectators would echo with the cry of “*recipe ferrum*—stab him! stab him!” As soon as his death was announced, the conqueror dragged the body to a place called the Spoliarium, where it was stripped of its clothes and arms and inhumanly dispatched if there was any life remaining. Julius Cæsar presented 320 pairs of gladiators; Trajan exhibited 10,000

¹ Glover, *The Jesus of History*, p. 68,

of them for the entertainment of the people. Domitian arranged a fight between dwarfs and women.

And what of the morality of this period? Its writers bear witness to that; Petronius, Apuleius and Ovid paint a picture of almost incredible foulness. Its worship of Thammuz and Laverna, of Cotytto and Cybele were often nothing but a series of disgusting orgies. The visitor to Pompeii sees on every other door and wall symbols of obscenity; while many of the frescoes which defaced the buildings have been hidden away by the excavators so that the visitor may be spared these hideous proofs of the degeneracy of a dying Paganism. Consider what chance a child had, brought up in such an atmosphere. Family life as such was almost unknown in the early Empire. In the first place the *familia* was the household consisting principally of a crowd of slaves. The "paterfamilias" could kill them when they got too old for work, and expose his children. There is a letter which has been preserved by accident for us written by an Egyptian Greek to his wife and dated in the year A.D. 1. The husband, Hilarion, who has gone to Alexandria has left his wife expecting a baby. This is how he writes: "Hilarion to Alis—greetings. . . . Know that we are still even now in Alexandria. Do not fidget if at the general return, I stay in Alexandria. I pray and beseech you take care of the little child, and as soon as we have our wages, I will send you up something. If you are delivered, if it is a male let it live; if it is a female cast it out. . . ." ¹ It seems incredible that a husband can send an obviously affectionate letter to his wife, at the same time giving instructions for what seems to us to be such a wantonly cruel deed.

The matrons were but rarely virtuous, divorces were extremely common, and infants were often sacrificed while yet unborn in order to pander to the vanity of the mother.

Much that we have said of the Early Empire is equally true of life in Greece. Slavery was rampant and child exposure was common. "A man though poor," said a Greek writer, "will not expose a son; but if rich, he will scarcely preserve a daughter." ² Even Lycurgus, the Spartan law-giver, directed that all infants pronounced deformed or defective should be flung into a pit at the foot of Mount Taygetus.

Even a hasty consideration of the religion in Greece and Rome will help us to realize that it could scarcely be expected to produce morality. Homer and Hesiod are full of stories of

¹ Quoted by Glover, p. 66.

² Posidippus, quoted in Stobæus (Flor. iii. 79 Bibl. Teubn.).

the loves of Zeus and Jupiter, and of the various love adventures of the other gods. Three-quarters of the frescoes on the walls at Pompeii deal with such subjects. What should we expect to happen to the morals of our children if we replaced the pictures of Christ blessing the children, of the Good Shepherd or the Light of the World by such pictures as are to be seen here on every hand? Even Plato, much as he admired Homer, refused to allow the poet's works in his ideal Republic. The religion itself was a direct incentive to evil living. In fact, as in Homer, mortals seem to have a higher code of morality than the gods.

Further, Greece and Rome divorced morality from religion. The most immoral people could and often did take part in the most sacred mysteries of the religion. Immorality played a very definite part in the rites themselves. At Corinth, in the temple of Aphrodite, there were a thousand temple-girls; at a temple in Syria there were 6,000—all of them dedicated without their consent to a life of misery and shame. Beyond all this it was a religion of terror, not perhaps for the highly educated or for the philosopher, but for the vast majority of the people, for whom ignorance bred superstition, and who were continually living in dread of offending some of the gods and goddesses. Even Socrates, who marks the highest point to which Greek philosophy ever rose, died with a request on his lips to his friend Crito to sacrifice a cock to Asclepius and so fulfil his debt to that god.¹ What must have been the relief to mankind when the "pale Galilean" conquered and men were freed from the tyranny of ten thousand gods!

This, then, is a picture—an extremely feeble picture—of the life of an ancient world. Shall we dare to say any longer that it was a bright and glowing world because the shadow of the cross has not yet fallen across it and robbed it of its fairest hues? We can only say so in our ignorance. All that it had of good went to the few who were strong; for the many who were weak, for the poor, the enslaved, the women, the children, life had little to offer except sorrow and misery.

"On that hard Pagan world, disgust
And secret loathing fell;
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell."²

Such was the state of affairs into which Christianity came. Could it possibly be that so apparently weak a seed was

¹ Plato, *Apology*.

² M. Arnold, *Obermann once more*.

going to uproot the growth of ages? Of course, truth has always worked slowly and against great obstacles, but gradually the Christian ideal began to make itself felt. Justinian made it a crime to kill a slave—thus, at any rate, we see that by this time it began to be acknowledged that slaves had rights of their own. Many of the bishops and leaders of the Church emancipated their slaves and encouraged others to do the same. Gregory the Great, for instance, declared that “as our Redeemer took on flesh, in order to free us from the slavery of sin, so should we restore to freedom those who were deprived of it by the law of nations.”

Then again we see how Christianity influenced the spirit of humanity. One of the first decrees made by the first Christian Emperor Constantine was against the amphitheatre. But the people were not yet ready for this change. They loved it so passionately that they refused to do without these brutal amusements. Tennyson, in a well-known poem,¹ describes the event which finally put an end to it. A certain Telemachus, a hermit, travelled from the East to Rome in order to protest against these un-Christian barbarities; but the people were so enraged at his attempt to stop the games that they stoned him to death. Provoked by this incident, the Emperor Honorius absolutely forbade them, but it was not until 520, during the reign of Justin, that they were entirely abolished.

Again, the Christian religion improved the position of the women and children. Constantine the Great made laws against the exposure of children, and directed the officers of his revenue to receive and educate at his expense, the children of such parents as were unable to educate them. This reminds us too, that the early Church organized charities and beneficences, orphanages and hospitals. So destitute was the ancient world of true and generous actions that Lucian, a Greek writer of the second century, was provoked to laughter by this new sight of Christians visiting prisons and ministering to the afflicted.

It is indisputable, both friend and enemy being witness, that the spread of the gospel led to a remarkable, probably an unparalleled moral reformation among those who accepted the new teaching. It was not until the fatal day when Constantine’s “conversion” made Christianity popular, that the Church ceased to function as salt in a corrupt world. The “Letter to Diognetus” (early second century) mentions that

¹ *Tennyson’s Works*, Globe Edition, p. 878.

the Christians do not expose their children. Pliny, governor of Bithynia and Pontus, about the year A.D. 110, wrote a famous letter to the Emperor Trajan to ask for instructions how to deal with Christians when they were accused before him, and declares that he had no fault to find with them "except a bad and excessive superstition." The whole crime or error of the Christians lay in this—they were accustomed on a certain day to meet before daylight, and sing among themselves a hymn to Christ as a God; and to bind themselves by an oath not to commit any wickedness; not to be guilty of theft, or robbery, or adultery; never to falsify their word, nor to deny a pledge committed to them when called upon to return it. When these things were performed, it was their custom to separate, and then to come together again to a harmless meal, of which they partook in common without any disorder. The writings of Tertullian show how great was the moral contrast between the heathen and the Christians.

It is, of course, comparatively easy to point out certain historical facts, but it is much more difficult to get at the difference of outlook between Paganism and Christianity. It is clear that Paganism did not satisfy the more thoughtful people of the Empire. The very unsatisfactory gods and goddesses of Greece and Rome had been to the more educated Greeks often little more than a jest, but to the serious-minded Romans they were in the long run a disappointment. There was not sufficient moral power in the creed of Paganism to satisfy the minds of thinkers and moralists such as Socrates, Plato, Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus and Seneca. But even these great thinkers could not evolve a creed which could replace the Paganism of their respective periods. Nor for the most part did they wish to do so. What would have been the position of women in a religion founded by a man who dismissed his wife and children from his death-chamber as roughly as Socrates did? What kind of a social order would have been built up by Marcus Aurelius the ruthless persecutor of the Christians, or Seneca the usurer whose extortions in Britain were directly responsible for the rising which ended in the annihilation of a whole Roman legion?

During the early Empire we find that the dissatisfaction with Paganism led to the popularization of a Persian god called Mithras. Now this Mithraic worship possessed a far deeper foundation of morality than the national religion. It seemed, in fact, able to satisfy the growing ideals of the best thinkers among the Roman race. During the reign of Nero we find on

the one hand the religion of Mithras numbering its worshippers by the hundreds of thousands all over the Roman Empire. Even in Britain there are traces of the Mithraic cult. Early last century an underground cave devoted to the worship of Mithras was opened up at Housesteads in Northumberland. There were thousands even in Britain who prayed to Mithras to keep them true to their vows of chastity, of justice and brotherhood. On the other hand, we find a few despised Christians carrying on their worship in the holes and caverns of the earth. Some of the Christians provided a new kind of spectacle for the jaded spectators in the Coliseum ; some of them were used as torches for Nero's chariot-races, others suffered death in equally horrible ways. Now it is a well-known fact that persecution is good for the growth of any religion ; but there is a point where relentless persecution leads to extermination, and it looked as though this must surely happen to Christianity when almost as soon as a man was converted he became a martyr. Thinkers of the times of Nero, if they compared the two religions, must have been quite sure in their own minds that it was Mithraism that was destined to become a world religion, and that Christianity was doomed to disappear to the sound of the groans of the last misguided Christian martyrs. But it was not so. Mithraism is now remembered only by the historian and the archæologist. What is the reason ? Historians have faced this problem, and failed to find an answer. Nor can one be found, except that Christianity is the revelation of God in Christ. Man did not invent it, and man could not destroy it.

“ Christianity, we conclude, answered man's needs and his cry for aid, articulate or inarticulate, conscious or unconscious, in the early days of the Roman Empire as did no other creed or philosophy. When, however, we face the question soberly, whence came such a creed into existence which could satisfy human wants as none other before or since, and how came the new despised and persecuted religion to overcome perils and dangers of a terrible kind with no external agency in its favour and every external power ranged against it, we do not feel inclined to deduce the rapidity of its growth and its victory over all opponents within the Roman Empire from a mere balance of its internal advantages over its external disqualifications. We admit the vigorous secondary causes of its growth, but we have left its origin unexplained, and cannot but see as well the vigour and strength of the foes which willed its destruction and powerfully dissuaded from its acceptance.

And there exists for us as historians no secondary nor human combination of causes sufficient to account for the triumph of Christianity." ¹

Travellers through a desert wonder sometimes at the vegetation that manages to find sustenance there; because it is a living thing it succeeds in getting to itself the necessary water. So the Church, like its Lord, was a root out of a dry ground, a succulent plant coming up in a moral and religious desert. Nothing but the Life of God enabled it to survive.

Leaving for a moment the chronological method, let us further consider how Christianity influenced civilization both intellectually and politically. Even its professed enemies have had to confess that the whole foundation of modern civilization was laid on Christianity. So said Fichte and Comte, while even Strauss was grudgingly forced to admit that among the improvers of the ideal of humanity Jesus stands at all events in the first class. Lecky went farther, and asserted that Catholicism (and he meant Christianity) laid the very foundation of modern civilization.

Intellectually, too, we have to recognize how much art and literature and even language itself owe to Christianity. How many languages both ancient and modern have been reduced to writing for no other reason than that a written translation of the Scriptures might be made. Thus in the fourth century, Ulfilas, a Gothic bishop, invented letters for his illiterate countrymen, translated the Bible into their tongue and instructed them. As a matter of fact, practically all the remains of Gothic we possess consists of fragments of translations of the Bible. In the same way the Cornish, Old Prussian, Saxon and Bulgarian languages are all preserved almost solely by means of translations of the Scriptures into these respective languages. Again we have seen the indirect influence which the Bible has had upon our literature. The Authorized Version of 1611 did far more than any other book to fix and elevate the language. If anyone doubts this let him compare the prose of the middle of the sixteenth century with that of the middle of the seventeenth. We should not be so rash as to say that this was the only cause, but certainly it was by far the greatest. In the same way the German language was fixed and elevated by Luther's translation.

Consider the great literary works of the last nineteen centuries. Augustine's *City of God*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Bunyan's

¹ W. Henderson, *The Life and Principate of the Emperor Nero*, pp. 356-7.

Pilgrim's Progress, Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, all of these were composed directly under the influence of Christianity. Pass through any of our great art galleries—the Pitti Gallery at Florence, the Louvre at Paris, the National Gallery in London, and see how many of the greatest works of the greatest masters got their inspiration from Scripture—what sculpture can rival the Moses or David of Michael Angelo. what architecture can rival St. Peter's at Rome, or the cathedrals at Rheims, Durham, or a hundred other places, all erected to the glory of God, for the purpose of Christian worship?

Politically, too, we see the great influence which Christianity has exercised. In the first place it provided law and justice where they had not previously existed. A study of the early laws of our own race shows how greatly they were influenced by the scriptural codes; indeed the modern English and still more the modern Scottish code are largely based upon the Mosaic laws, interpreted to some extent in the light of the New Testament. Nor is this true merely of Britain; "Christianity," says Montesquieu, "gave the character to the jurisprudence of the Empire. It is easy to see that the code of Theodosius is no more than a compilation of the ordinances of the Christian emperors." Christianity, too, laid emphasis upon the fact of our common humanity, and thus helped to break down the tremendous barriers between people and people. It taught the nations that "over the mountains also there are people." The religion that Christ taught was not a local creed; it was for all nations, it had no mysteries which could only be understood by the select few; at least it had none, until even into the pure teaching of Christianity the corruption of Pagan influence flowed and Christianity began to forget the spirit of her religion, lavishing her affection and veneration upon the outside symbols. But even then, the lowest born serf had a right to enter the priesthood of the Church, and become not only the equal of barons but the superior of kings. Such, then, was the great tree which sprang from so insignificant a seed.

Let us turn our eyes back again to the early days of the faith. We have seen that Paganism and Judaism were unable to prevent the growth of Christianity. The enemies of the faith tried persecution—it failed; they tried contemptuous silence, and that too failed; then they tried to produce a rival religion, that too failed; so they tried argument. Lucian tried to laugh it out of court with his atheistic sneers; but all he succeeded in doing was merely to strip the poetry and imaginative-ness from his own heathen religion and to leave it hideously

bare. Philostratus and Jamblichus sought a false gospel, Porphyry and Hierocles tried mysticism and intellectual theosophy. Celsus opened a rapid fire of arguments upon the bulwarks. But even here Christianity matched argument with argument. Clement and Origen of Alexandria were more than able to hold their own against the merciless pagan attacks. And not only did they refute their opponents' arguments, but recognizing and appreciating the rushlight of truth with which the heathen philosophers sought to pick their way through the morass of human affairs, they invited them to come out into the glorious and living light. "Christ shineth more brightly than the sun: through Him the blind see! Night shall flee from you and you shall behold the heavens in their glory." ¹

But Christianity drove back one attack only to await the next. And this time the attacks were of a far more serious nature; they were from within the fold. It was by no means an unmixed victory when Constantine became a Christian, or at any rate professed Christianity, and the religion of Christ became popular. Christianity did not succeed because Constantine became a Christian; rather it was that Constantine became a Christian because Christianity succeeded. "The new religion" says a French historian "must have been very decidedly a rising sun for a man like Constantine to bow before it." ² And when it became popular, heresies arose which threatened to sap its very foundations. Chief among these was the doctrine of Arianism aimed against the person of Christ. Frenzied controversies arose, and the Christian historian Socrates compares these deadly feuds over the nature and person of Christ to a night battle wherein the combatants neither saw one another nor understood what they were fighting for. Yet even amidst all this clash of arms there were still vast numbers who were sound in heart and doctrine, and as a result the truth of the Godhead of Christ was stated in unmistakable terms by the orthodox Church.

But while the Christians were engaged in fighting one another within the Church, vast heathen hordes were knocking at her very gates and threatening to overwhelm her. The movements of nations in the steppes of Asia caused a general unrest throughout the West of Europe. The fifth century was the time of the greatest national movements. In 406-9 the Vandals and other tribes invaded Gaul from the East and subsequently

¹ St. Clement of Alexandria, *Protreptikon*, xii. § 119.

² De Pressensé, *Hist. des Trois Prem. Siècles*, ii., p. 524.

took possession of Spain and N.W. Africa. Immediately afterwards the Visigoths, a branch of the great Gothic nation, invaded Italy and captured Rome. Then there were constant threatenings from the Bavarians and the Alamanni. But above all the Huns were a cause of terror to the whole of Western Europe. They were supposed to be devil-possessed by the terrified nations who were unable to oppose their victorious onward march. In the latter part of the fifth century Italy was again invaded and Rome captured, this time by the other branch of the Gothic race—the Ostrogoths. During the whole of the century Italy was the scene of constant fighting between the Goths and other invaders as well as the native Italians themselves and at last in the latter part of the sixth century, when the Ostrogoths had finally been overthrown, Italy was invaded by Langobardi from the North. But fortunately Christian missionaries had not been wanting even to these wild tribes. We have already spoken of Ulfilas, the apostle of the Goths. Before they sacked Rome his teaching had made its influence felt. In spite of the cruelties which must of necessity accompany every invasion, the records of the catastrophe speak in the strongest terms of the general forbearance they showed. The sack of Rome by Alaric in A.D. 410 was on the whole merciful. Though the pagans saw nothing but disaster in the fall of their stronghold, Augustine hailed the coming of the Goths as the beginning of a new state of things wherein the kingdom of God should hold sway upon earth. Had the flood of this and the other invasions rushed forward in a single tide, it would have submerged civilization altogether, but the heralds of the Cross met the invaders as it were one by one. Attila the Hun found a Leo at the Mincio, an Agnanus under the wall of Orleans, and a Lupus at the gates of Troyes; the King of the Alamanni found a Germanus and a Severinus to tell them the story of the Cross. Posterity is not sufficiently aware of what it owes to these servants of God, who in peril of their lives preached the truth to the barbarian hordes. If Odoacer, when he became master of Rome, showed such remarkable clemency, in sparing her monuments, her laws and her schools, and contented himself with destroying the empty name of her empire, it was because he had not forgotten the words of Severinus the Roman monk, in the days of his youth.

But we have already caught a glimpse of another series of attacks which were by this time being made upon the Church, as insidious as the heresies of the Arians or the Gnostics.

These attacks were a direct result of the influence exercised upon Christianity by its two great rivals Judaism and Paganism. It is one thing for a truth to be revealed and another thing for it to be understood. For so many centuries worship had been connected with a priesthood, with temples and sacrifices, that it was very difficult for the ordinary man to conceive of a purely spiritual religion, to "worship in spirit and in truth." Hence the old Pagan and Jewish ideas began to creep in, at first almost unnoticed, but soon they held sway. At the end of the second century we find Tertullian speaking of the "sacerdotal order" and calling the bishop or overseer a priest. Half a century later in the writings of Cyprian we find the official priesthood of a certain class definitely established. There is a change too in the Lord's Supper, which is very gradually transformed from a simple memorial into an elaborate sacrificial ceremony. But in spite of all that, though the truth of God had to wrestle with the ignorance and imperfection of man, there were still those found who had not succumbed to the prevailing tendencies.

Again, from the earliest times men had been so used in all the great religions to see a close connection between religion and the state that they felt bound to attempt to make Christianity fulfil the same functions as the old heathen religions. At first this was clearly impossible. But when Christianity became popular and Constantine was "converted," the problem came to the front. The Emperor had been Pontifex Maximus of the old religion and so he felt he must occupy a similar position with regard to Christianity. Either the state must master the Church or the Church the state. In the East the former happened, and woe betide an Athanasius or a Chrysostom who was bold enough to lift his voice in opposition to the vices of the Emperor his master, or the Emperor's friends and kinsmen. In the West the "Church" became a mighty state and spiritual life reached its lowest ebb as a direct consequence. It may often have stood for good against evil, though alas, this was by no means always the case, but in that it had departed so far from the original intention of the Founder as expressed in His teaching and that of the apostles who surrounded Him and immediately followed Him, it lost much of its vital power. Yet in spite of all this, Christian truth lived and worked as we have seen not only in transforming men but in ameliorating the conditions and atmosphere which surrounded it.

At the beginning of the seventh century there were to be found many different sects of Christianity. When a young

Arabian of an inquiring turn of mind sought to find if haply the truth was to be discovered in this religion he was faced by a welter of jarring sects, by the Monophysites, the Jacobites, the Maronites, the Melchites and so forth. Is it to be wondered that he found satisfaction in none of them, and that that young Arabian—Mohammed—founded a religion of his own? Backed up by the swords of his devoted followers, Mohammed set out to force his religion upon the world. Within 170 years of the death of its founder the religion of Islam had swept through Arabia and Persia and northwards to the Aral Sea, through North Africa and the greater part of Spain. Surely at last Christianity, effete as it outwardly seemed, would be swallowed up by this more virile religion. But no. In 732 Charles Martel hurled the Mohammedans back from France at the battle of Tours. Had it not been for his brave stand it looks as though France and even Britain might have spent many centuries beneath the heel of Islam. These indeed were dark days for that true Christianity which like an underground river was lost to sight, but only to reappear purer and more crystal than before.

Modern Europe owes a great deal to two movements, one of them dating from the fifteenth, one from the sixteenth century : one the Renaissance, the other the Reformation. It seems strange that both these movements were at any rate indirectly brought about, as even the most modern historians will admit, by the Eastern invasion of the Turkish Moslems, which led to the capture of Constantinople in 1453 and the subsequent dispersal of the scholars of the Eastern Greek Empire. Many of the latter fled to Italy, where they were received with open arms. Once again students read with delight the poems of Homer, the discourses of Plato, or the tragedies of Aeschylus. The result amid the degenerate heathenism which too often went by the name of Christianity was a revival of paganism. In Italy it may be said that this largely took the place of Christianity. What was its effect? Florence was a rich city, well governed and strong; Pisa its growing rival; Genoa and Venice were sister cities who ruled the seas and brought home merchandise from the ends of the earth; Bologna and Padua attracted scholars from every part of Europe. But the revived paganism sapped the vitality from them one and all. It introduced luxury and tyranny side by side and the great country of Italy entered upon a period of decadence from which it took her many centuries to recover.

But the Renaissance brought the Reformation in its train.

The fresh study of the New Testament in its original language taught men that Christianity had travelled far from the teachings of its founder. The Reformation sought to escape from both the elements we have already dealt with, the undue position of the priest and the political aspect of the Church. Luther's great watchword "justification by faith" was a claim to allow the soul to stand face to face with God and to get rid of all that is between. The doctrine revived Germany. But the Reformation as it affected Britain is more closely connected with Calvin. Whatever we may think about his doctrine of God, we shall all agree that he taught that a man's duty to God was to obey beyond all things the dictates of his belief. This was his conception of human duty; and this gave to the believer a single aim in life and a driving force, so that the influence of Calvin was powerfully felt in England, Scotland, France, Holland and Switzerland.

In England the truth which Calvin stood for was primarily felt in what we call Puritanism. Now we all know that Puritanism led its devotees to many unhappy excesses; but when the worst is made of all this we have to acknowledge our indebtedness to it in every branch of modern life. To Puritanism we owe much even in the realm of literature. We have only to mention two works, *Paradise Lost* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*—perhaps the greatest poem and the greatest prose work in our language—to remind ourselves of this. A great world-power owes its birth to this same Puritanism. In fact it is safe to say that Puritanism more powerfully affected the British race than any other influence recorded in its history.

What did the teaching of Calvin do for Scotland? It found it a down-trodden people, made coarse and brutal by centuries of war, and within a few years we find them free, noble and happy. Scotland, the land of the Bible, from whose Christian homes have gone forth so many godly divines and pioneer missionaries, learned the truths of the Gospel from the followers of Calvin.

In France, Holland, Switzerland, the forces of Spain or the crowned heads of France found that it was impossible to force their religious ideas upon those who had seen the simplicity of the gospel as revealed in the New Testament. They might be slain or merely driven from place to place, but they had caught a vision of the glorious city of God, and they were willing to suffer everything for its sake.

*Magna est veritas et prevalebit.*¹ We could trace if space

¹ "Great is Truth, and it will prevail."

permitted, still more attacks which have been made upon Christianity. We might deal with the indifference which sank as a heavy mist upon many professing Christians during the eighteenth century. And then came the wonderful revival connected with the names of Wesley and Whitfield ; or again, coming nearer to our own times, there was a day when an atheistic science seemed to be about to rob the Christian of the hope within him ; but these attacks passed away like the dew on a summer's morning. To-day we see the rising tide of materialism, the coarser anti-religious forms of socialism ; the assault of a certain portion of the scientific world upon the basis of faith ; but casting our eyes back we think of the attacks from without and from within which have failed in the past and we take courage. If it is of God it cannot be overthrown.

After all, are not all these onslaughts themselves an argument for the truth of Christianity ? Is there any other religion which has had to endure so many assaults and of so varied a nature ? It seems as if all the forces of evil have concentrated their efforts against it, but in vain. At the present moment the Bible has been translated into 528 different languages.¹ Thousands of missionaries have voluntarily given up the comforts of home and are to-day preaching the Gospel in the deserts of Mongolia, in the forests of Central Africa, in the swamps of South America. Hinduism is tottering before the inroads of modern thought, Confucianism and Buddhism are fast losing ground before the advance of materialism, and even the impregnable castle of Islam is putting out signals of distress, but the Cross still stands fast, and Christians looking back over the pages of history take courage, never doubting the issue of the combat. Now as of old they take their stand beneath the Cross of Christ, and in that sign they will conquer.

Judging from the human standpoint, the two chief tests of a religion, or a theory, are what fruits does it produce, and how does it stand the test of time. Christ's prophetic claim for His church has been verified by history. "On this rock," He said, "I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The battle still continues but victory is in sight.

¹ Viz., 134 complete Bibles, 124 New Testaments, 270 portions.

CHAPTER IX

God is a Living Force To-day

THE previous chapters of this book have all been more or less historical. Every relation of the Christian message is bound to be historical to some extent ; a faith or experience that does not depend on the accuracy of the facts regarding Jesus Christ is a mere counterfeit of true Christianity. But we do not all care about history ; for some persons history is useless and unreal ; nothing matters but the living present. Since they played with their toys in the nursery, nothing will do for them but a machine that will work. This temperament is apt to be impatient of Christianity, and to think that its only function is to provide a living for curates, and a kind of "dope" for the miserable. The answer to this is, that when a man or a woman is thoroughly given to God, he or she is linked on to the greatest power operating in the world.

This power is shown by its *regenerative force*. We will not repeat the historical evidence given of this in the last chapter, but come down at once to our own times. Viscount Bryce, lately British Ambassador to America, wrote in his just-published book on *Modern Democracies* : "Christianity—a far more powerful force than any political ideas or political institutions, since it works on the innermost heart of man—has produced nearly all the moral progress that has been achieved since it first appeared, and can in individual minds transmute lead into gold, yet Christianity has not done those things for people because, checked or perverted by the worse propensities of human nature, it has never been applied in practice."

It has never been applied in practice. That is, on a national or semi-national scale. Whole nations have rendered lip-service to Christianity, especially in the days of Popes Hildebrand and Innocent III, when there were very few Christians in the New Testament sense of the word. It is absurd to look

upon England as an example of Christian morality to-day, when the great majority of the people do not even profess to belong to the churches, and some churches do not demand a New Testament "conversion" of their members.

But in small communities, and in individual cases, conversion has been a reality and there has been a definite spiritual experience, and where that is so, moral progress *has* been achieved, and in such minds lead has been transmuted into gold. The most quotable examples of moral progress in a community, in our day, are seen in the foreign mission field. We will not repeat the oft-told tale of the deep impression made on Charles Darwin by missionary work in Tierra del Fuego, true and striking as that is. Of New Zealand, formerly a cannibal country, he wrote in his *Journal of Researches*, "The lesson of the missionary is the enchanter's wand. . . . The march of the improvement consequent on the introduction of Christianity throughout the South Seas probably stands by itself in the records of history." Sir Bartle Frere, Governor of Bombay, lecturing in 1872, said, "whatever you may be told to the contrary, the teaching of Christianity among the 160 millions of civilized, industrious Hindoos and Mohammedans in India is effecting changes, moral, social, and political, which, for extent and rapidity of effect, are far more extraordinary than anything you or your fathers have witnessed in modern times." ¹

Let one example suffice, in which most of the workers are personally well-known to us, and the facts are certain. It relates to a town called Bunkeya, in Katanga, Congo Belge. The pioneer missionary (F. S. Arnot) went there all alone in 1886. It was at that time the centre of a kingdom about as large as Ireland, ruled with an iron hand by an old tyrant called Msidi. Brutal executions were of almost daily occurrence, and the village was continually decorated with human heads hung around on poles. Persons were often buried alive. The punishment for stealing was to have the hands cut off. Wars of extermination of hostile or offending tribes often took place. Sex morality simply did not exist. Drunkenness was common. So many women were brought in by raiders, who had killed off the men in distant villages, that polygamy was the rule. Many of the people were held in slavery. Two human sacrifices were offered every year at the ceremony of

¹ Testimonies in plenty like these, mostly by high Government officials, are collected in a small book published by the Church Missionary Society, called "Are Foreign Missions doing any good?"

opening the royal salt-pans. The men did little or no work beyond fighting and hunting; agricultural labour was left to the women.

To-day, after about twenty-five years of almost continuous mission work, all is changed. A son of Msidi's rules the district with justice and no cruelty. The executions, wars, heads on poles, and human sacrifices are all gone. There is a decently built, well-arranged prosperous town, and most of the old open wickedness has been put down. Some of Msidi's executioners have become preachers of the gospel, and have exhibited its grace in their lives.

There are many native Christian homes where there is a pure family life and no beer-drinking or participation in heathen festivities. Many natives can read and write, and they have learned to do some work. Such instances could be multiplied almost indefinitely.

It is, of course, a widespread tradition that "mission niggers" are no good as white man's servants. The reason simply is, that the better type of convert does not go out into the service of British officials or traders. One is reminded of the story of the alleged mission convert who advertised his virtues to a possible employer by protesting "Me native Christian, me drink whiskey like Sahib, me say 'Damn'!"

But we need not go across the seas to find lead transmuted into gold in individual lives. There are personally known to us a number of men and women who have experienced a complete change in outlook, in purpose in life, and in attitude towards God—a change wrought by divine power, which is aptly called "conversion." Some are well-known employers on a large scale, at the head of big undertakings; others have belonged to the "down and out" class, or have been leaders of gangs of revolutionaries. But everyone in any country, who has taken part in or knows the history of vigorous revival movements, knows that a complete, permanent reversal of the habits, and a total reconstruction of the character and even of the appearance, of men and women sunk in sin and degradation has been a perfectly ordinary phenomenon. The Salvation Army Corps and mission halls of our great cities can generally furnish examples to-day. Mr. Harold Begbie has dressed real characters in a slight garb of fiction in his *Broken Earthenware*. Real stories of broken men and women, helpless in the grip of temptation, morally and socially ruined, often on the verge of suicide, may be found in the narratives published by the

Jerry Macauley Mission in America, and these¹ not only drawn from the lowest classes, but University men who have made shipwreck, amongst the rest. And where—unless God is a living force to-day—may the dynamic be found, that will reliably and permanently transmute lead into gold like this? In novels, love is credited with the power, but how seldom is this seen in real life, and how futile it seems to bring it to bear on some of the most needy cases!

Writing in 1906, of the work of the Salvation Army and on the word "Regeneration," the *Daily Mail* said, "There is more miracle in that word than in all the pages of scripture over which men of science and theologians quarrel and contend with a becoming amity and a dignified tedium. To take a man, so sunken in infamy that his very mother has cast him off, and to make that man, almost in the twinkling of an eye, conscious of his immortality and joyful in the thought of God's clemency, this is a miracle before which science herself is silent; and this is what the Salvation Army is doing every day and hour of the day. . . . It goes to the vilest and makes them the purest!"

Let us take two classical examples of "conversion" by way of illustration. In June, 1648, at the siege of Maidstone, during the struggle between cavaliers and roundheads, there was in the King's army a certain dissolute soldier of fortune named John Gifford—a man typical of the less respectable elements of the rank and file of Charles' army. He was taken prisoner that day by Fairfax, and nearly all his comrades killed. He was to have been executed in a day or two, but his sister managed to smuggle him out of prison in disguise. He went to Bedford and became a public disgrace, living by selling quack medicines, and begging, and gambling. He was generally the worse for drink, and sometimes at the point of suicide—until by the incoming of God as a living force he was "converted," and became a Puritan preacher. When John Bunyan the tinker was in great distress of soul, it was by the ministry of "holy John Gifford" that he was shown the way that led to his conversion also. And the original of the gracious figure of "Evangelist" in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, is none other than Charles I's late discreditable soldier.

There is a hymn in most hymn-books beginning:—

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds."

¹ *Down in Water St. ; The Dry-dock of a Thousand Wrecks.*

One would scarcely expect to know that the writer of that and many similar verses had been at the age of twenty a seaman on a West African slaver, and so notorious for violence, blasphemy, and profligacy that he was marooned on a low sandy island covered with palm-trees, near Sierra Leone. Here he worked in great privation and misery, barely covered by an old pair of trousers and shirt, a yard or two of cotton wrapped about his shoulders, and an old handkerchief on his head, with no shelter from the sun or the storms of the rainy season, and all but a slave to his master. Yet this man, repentant and "converted," became rector of St. Woolnoth, London, and writer, with the poet Cowper, of the Olney hymns.

Perhaps a reader may say that all this lies outside his experience; he has never met such a case. Very likely not. People only see what they look for in this world. Many persons have never seen, to their knowledge, a famous actress or a professional boxer, but they can be found by those who know where to look.

And what is it that *effects* the change in human lives which these cases illustrate? Not a mere effort of the will. Not turning over a new leaf. Not a pious determination, nor a new code of rules.

All these may be tried, and found powerless. It is the willing admission into the soul of the forgiving grace, the power and the authority, of Jesus Christ. And let it be noted that the gospel which has produced such results in the past is *not* the timid, hesitant preaching that doubts the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the Resurrection, doesn't believe in prophecy, and thinks Biblical history is mythical. The power of God does not work with *that* message. A fearless belief in the Bible has proved essential for the preaching of a powerful evangel.

It is easiest, of course, to write up the spectacular. But for one man or woman who gives evidence of a revolutionary change in the life, when God comes in as a living force, there are a score or a hundred who experience the same force but in quieter ways. Really, this larger body of evidence, the every day experience of Christians, has the greater weight. Professor James¹ labours to explain away conversions by supposing an irruption of the subconscious into the conscious self—which looks very like solving all the problems of electricity by labelling them "electricity," but one cannot so explain the profound conviction of countless thousands of Christian souls that they have got into touch with a living force apart from

¹ *Varieties of Religious Experience.*

themselves. They find the force at work in ready help in fighting the battle against temptation ; in a constant Companionship in all life's joys and sorrows ; in responses to prayer.

Everyone who heard Sir Ernest Shackleton lecture, and tell the story of his terribly adventurous journey with two companions across the untracked glaciers of South Georgia, will remember how he concludes the story. "When I look back at those days I have no doubt that Providence guided us, not only across those snowfields, but across the storm-white sea that separated Elephant Island from our landing place on South Georgia. I know that during that long and racking march of thirty-six hours over the un-named mountains and glaciers of South Georgia it seemed to me often that we were four, not three. I said nothing to my companions on the point, but afterwards Worsley said to me, 'Boss, I had a curious feeling on the march that there was another person with us.' Crean confessed to the same idea. One feels 'the dearth of human words, the roughness of mortal speech,' in trying to describe things intangible, but a record of our journeys would be incomplete without a reference to a subject very near to our hearts." ¹

What is here reticently hinted at has been acknowledged, triumphed in, openly proclaimed, by the Christian experience of every country and every generation. It is difficult to write about or to put in as evidence, but there is a body of testimony which can by no means be ignored. One cannot, for instance, turn a deaf ear to the deeply sincere utterances of those who have fought in vain against some besetting sin of the flesh, who have been, like Paul in the seventh of Romans, torn in two by warring natures, fighting, losing, seeing the evil in themselves growing and extending—

"And so there grew great tracts of wilderness
Wherein the beast was ever more and more
But man was less and less, till Arthur came"—

and so the Heavenly Prince came in and gave deliverance. In this connection—at the time when the London County Council was closing its Farmfield colony for habitual drunkards, after ten years, on account of the low percentage of cures, the Salvation Army women's hostels reported that of 133 cases discharged during three years, 103 were doing well, and the rest lost sight of.

Take and turn over the pages of any standard Christian

¹ *South*, Sir E. Shackleton, p. 209.

hymn-book ; what an impressive testimony we find to the joy, strength, and comfort imparted by the great Companion, whether it be in the mediaeval abbot's "*Jesu, dulcis memoria,*" or a modern production. For another line of testimony, take a couple of modern Christian biographies—say Hudson Taylor's life, and the autobiography of George Müller. It is impossible to read either of these without recognizing that there was a living Force working in and through them, and producing an amazing result, in the one case the China Inland Mission, and in the other the five world-famous orphan homes. These were founded as a direct experiment on God in the year 1835 ; no one has ever been asked for a donation, nor would the directors ever disclose directly or indirectly the state of the funds, except that an annual business statement has been issued so as to 'provide things honest in the sight of all men.' Forty times in two consecutive years they commenced the day without means in hand to provide ; on every one of those and subsequent occasions, in answer to prayer, the need was supplied and no one lacked. £2,242,776 have been obtained in this way, and the work still continues on the same principles. George Müller taught that granted five conditions prayer will always be answered :

1. It must be in the Name and for the merits of Jesus Christ. (John xvi. 23.)
2. There must be no wilful disobedience. (Psa. lxvi. 18.)
3. It must be in accordance with the will of God. (1 John v. 14.)
4. It must be with faith. (Mark xi. 24.)
5. Prayer must be persevering. (Luke xviii, 1.)

The orphanages were founded to test the truth of this teaching, and it has been abundantly vindicated for over eighty years. Fifteen thousand children, who are now scattered in every corner of the globe, have benefited by the supplies thus granted.

It is often claimed that Christianity nowadays is not doing anything to right the wrongs of the world, and that Christians will not suffer anything for their faith. This is ridiculously far from the truth. Granted that the majority of Christians may deserve the reproach, it is nevertheless a fact that very many are leading lives of hardship and poverty, entirely by their own choice, the better to minister to the temporal and spiritual needs of the world. The work of the Salvation Army lasses and of the city missionaries in this country is a case in point, and anyone who has had to do with the going

forth of educated young men and women, with strong home ties and the brightest of earthly prospects here, leaving everything to take up the arduous duties of a foreign missionary, is not likely to underrate the power of the call that nerves them for such a sacrifice. The creation of a medical service in China, the cause of education in India, and the uplift of the degraded races of Africa and the South Seas, owe almost everything to the self-sacrificing altruism of men and women who would never have stirred from home but for the power of that call. Nor should it be forgotten that many Christians who stay at home give money up to their power and beyond their power to support the work of God, and often no one knows of their generosity. There is no motive on earth so fruitful in self-sacrifice and in service for others.

This is a very unsatisfactory chapter. It is written in cold ink, when it ought to be worked out in heart-thrilling experience. It absolutely requires a human document. It is in days of defeat, or of desperate disappointment, or of poignant bereavement, that the Force is felt so as to be believed in and rested on—when it guarantees life and re-union beyond the grave, and such a certainty of things eternal that they become as real as the things of earth. And when one reads in the newspapers or sees in real life stories of moral and social shipwreck—the misery of “the eternal triangle”; lives ruined by drink, lust, or greed; hatreds, jealousies, murders—the pathos of it is, that it is all so unnecessary. If these poor ill-fated lives, moths flying at a flame, had only been given to Christ and experienced His saving power, it would have been so different. Men and women say that it is not so; they were differently constituted; they had not the religious temperament. We have the highest possible authority for denying this. “For God so loved the *world*, that *whosoever*.” “Who will have *all men* to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” “Whosoever will, may come.” It is wilfulness that refuses.

CHAPTER X

The Faith of the Masters of Science

IT is in some respects a departure from the cardinal principles taught by the first founders of the Christian faith, to call in the world's thinkers as evidence for its truth. Both Paul and his Master attached little or no importance to the wisdom of this world—their message was revealed, not to the wise and prudent, but unto babes. Paul preached not with wisdom of words. The world by wisdom never did, and never will, find out God. In the first century, as now, not many wise men were called. There is half a chapter written in this strain at the beginning of Paul's letter to Corinth. In this deliberate turning away from the learned, and appeal to the poor and simple, Christianity is almost if not quite unique. Agnosticism and the heathen faiths court the educated and metaphysical type of mind. Voltaire said, "I do not care to enlighten maidservants and cobblers. That is the work of apostles."

There is no necessary connection between great learning or intellectual alertness, and spirituality. It does not follow because a man is a champion cricketer or an international footballer that he must also be a master of mathematics or chemistry or Greek literature; nor does it follow, because a man is a brilliant scholar, that his opinion is necessarily of the slightest importance on matters of faith and spiritual life. A beautiful, sturdy, well-grown idiot boy is a tragedy, but not more so than an atheist university professor; both suffer from a fatal deficiency.

There is, however, an idea abroad, sedulously fostered by a certain type of rationalistic propaganda, that all educated men have found out some conclusive facts which disprove the historical foundations of Christianity and utterly discredit the Bible. This notion is greedily caught hold of by the shallow-minded and lazy as a pretext for excusing themselves from any

personal investigation of the matter. This chapter is included principally to demolish such a ridiculous theory.

The fact is, that if a hundred men living to-day, belonging to any particular class or occupation, are interrogated about their attitude to Jesus Christ, and can be got to give an honest answer, a certain comparatively small proportion will be found to own allegiance to Him, another small proportion will be actively hostile, and the majority will exhibit various shades of neutrality, whether they be coalminers, shoemakers, or university dons. This always has been true in nominally Christian countries; it is, generally speaking, true to-day; and it is exactly what Christ and the Apostles foretold and expected.

With this preliminary explanation, we shall proceed to quote some testimonies which should go far to disprove the extraordinary falsehood referred to above, that all educated men have found something which makes Christian faith intellectually impossible. The number of witnesses that might be called is so enormous that some drastic limitation is necessary. We shall therefore exclude all clergy and ministers (yet many of these have been men of absolutely front-rank intellectual attainments), and shall include, with few additions, only modern British scientists, and British masters of literature.

THE FAITH OF MODERN SCIENTISTS

The greatest honour that is available for a British scientist is to be elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. The Presidency of the Royal Society is a token of esteem only bestowed on the very princes of science. It is therefore interesting to quote the testimonies of several recent presidents of the Royal Society.

Lord Rayleigh, one of the discoverers of the element argon, wrote, "In my opinion true science and true religion neither are nor could be opposed." He prefixed to his published papers the quotation;

"The works of the Lord are great
Sought out of all them that have pleasure therein."

Lord Kelvin, the eminent physicist, of whom Sir Wm. Ramsay said that to him "the world owes an eternal debt of gratitude, and he it was for whom no honour that men have it in their power to bestow could be too great," wrote in answer to an inquiry, "I have many times in my published writings within the past fifty years expressed myself decidedly, on purely scientific grounds, against atheistic and materialistic doctrines.

I may add that I am a member of the Church of England, and of the Episcopal Church of Scotland." On one occasion he said, "If you think strongly enough, you will be forced by science to believe in God, which is the foundation of all religion."

Lord Lister, the originator of the antiseptic system of wound treatment, a discovery that has saved and still saves every day countless lives and incalculable suffering, wrote, "I am a believer in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity."

Sir George Stokes, another president of the Royal Society, was an earnest and outspoken believer. He wrote that the cardinal point in the Christian faith is belief "that in Jesus of Nazareth the divine and human natures were united in one person, so that He is rightly called the Son of God; that after His death by crucifixion He rose from the dead, and appeared in a supernatural manner to numbers of His disciples, who were witnesses to the people of the fact of His resurrection."

Sir Wm. Huggins and Sir Michael Foster, two other presidents of the Royal Society, were looked upon as Christians. The former wrote, "I am neither an agnostic nor an atheist."

In 1898, Dr. Gladstone, well-known for his chemical researches, made an analysis of the religious faith of all those Fellows of the Royal Society, presumably the most eminent, who had held some official post. He divides the total number of 142 into three classes.

46 faith totally unknown to him.

25 doubtful.

71 reliable information available.

Of these 71 :

33 were known to be believers in Christ

6 were known to be sceptics or agnostics :

27 estimated to be believers in Divine revelation ;

5 estimated to be unbelievers.

Clerk Maxwell, Professor of Physics at Cambridge, was a well-known Christian, as a perusal of his life makes quite clear. During his last illness he said to a friend, "I have looked into most philosophical systems, and I have seen that none will work without a God."

Recently a large number of leaders of science in this country have been communicated with and a reply invited as to whether they considered that there is "any real conflict between the facts of science and the fundamentals of Christianity." An overwhelming number of replies were received stating that they found no such conflict. Amongst those who so expressed themselves were Sir George Stokes ; Lord Lister ; Lord

Avebury the anthropologist (who has been president of the British Association and many other societies); Sir Wm. Ramsay the famous chemist; Prof. J. H. Gladstone (president both of the Physical and the Chemical Societies); Prof. Balfour Stewart; Prof. P. G. Tait; Sir Wm. Abney (president of the Royal Astronomical and the Physical Societies); Professors James Geikie, Boyd Dawkins, Edward Hull, Sir J. Prestwich and Sir J. W. Dawson, five famous geologists; Prof. S. H. Vines the botanist; Prof. Sayce the Assyriologist; Professors Bayliss and M'Kendrick the physiologists; Dr. E. W. Maunder the astronomer; Prof. Crum Brown the chemist, and scores of others scarcely less famous. The medical profession has included many distinguished Christians, such as Sir James Young Simpson, the discoverer of chloroform. It would be difficult to think of an invention which has done as much to relieve suffering humanity; before Simpson's time every operation was a horror, but anaesthesia and antiseptics and asepsis have made all the triumphs of modern surgery possible. Simpson was a Christian of the most enthusiastic and evangelical type; he knew the Bible from cover to cover, and one of his latest utterances was "I have unshaken confidence in Jesus only." Asked on one occasion what he considered the greatest discovery he had ever made, he astonished and disconcerted his interrogator by replying, "That I have a Saviour."¹

So, too, was his distinguished nephew, Sir A. R. Simpson, Prof. of Midwifery in Edinburgh University; so also Sir Andrew Clark, President of the Royal College of Physicians. Other eminent medical men who have written or spoken in defence of the faith include Sir Wm. Broadbent, Sir Dyce Duckworth, Sir Thomas Barlow, Sir James Paget, Sir Donald Macalister, Sir A. Pearce Gould, Mr. Macadam Eccles, and Mr. Albert Carless—of course the list could be enormously extended.

It is not claimed that every one of the eminent scientists whose names have been given could be described as a Christian in the New Testament sense of the word—probably the majority could. But it is claimed that the testimony of these men, and of scores of others whose names are mentioned in the works referred to at the end of the chapter, thoroughly disproves the strange and ignorant notion that there are any facts known to educated men that have overthrown the historical foundations of the faith. As a matter of fact, many eminent scientists

¹ *B. E. Simpson's Life*, p. 127. Famous Scots Series.

have been earnest advocates of the gospel ; Sir Wm. Perkin, for instance, the discoverer of the aniline dyes, built a mission hall and worked in the Sunday-school. We will conclude this part of the subject with a few personal testimonies.

Sir G. Sims Woodhead, Professor of Pathology at Cambridge, wrote, "I see no contradiction whatever between faith in Jesus Christ as the one true God, and a full acceptance of all that has been proved of modern scientific discoveries. . . . I believe the Bible narrative because it appeals to all that is best in me ; because it brings God so near to sinful man ; and because the greatness of the sacrifice made for man there recorded, fills me with a sense of gratitude, hope and thankfulness, and a surety of salvation through the Atonement (if I accept it) that nothing else can afford."

Dr. Macalister, Professor of Anatomy at Cambridge, wrote, "I think the widespread impression of the agnosticism of scientific men is largely due to the attitude taken up by a few of the great popularizers of science, like Tyndall and Huxley. . . . It has been my experience that the disbelief in the revelation that God has given in the life and work, death and resurrection of our Saviour is more prevalent among what I may call the camp-followers of science, than amongst those to whom actual scientific work is the business of their lives." What is this but a modern rendering of what Bacon wrote centuries ago : "This I dare affirm in the knowledge of Nature, that a little natural philosophy, and the first entrance into it, doth dispose the opinion to atheism ; but on the other side, much natural philosophy, and wading deep into it, will bring about men's minds to religion."¹

It is not often that we know the spiritual history of a modern scientist, but of those that we do know there are none more interesting and affecting than that of Prof. G. J. Romanes, of Oxford. In his youth he had been a professed Christian, and had written an essay on prayer, but with the advent of Darwinism he gave up all faith and wrote a book called *A Candid Examination of Theism*. He became a famous naturalist and some of his researches on the Medusa are classical on the subject to this day. The Romanes Lectures at Oxford were instituted in his memory. Then he was much moved by the death of a relative, but he decided, torture though it was, to be utterly true to his reason, whether he might be a Christian or not. Health was failing, and at this stage he wrote the touching lines :

¹ Bacon, *Meditation Sacr.*, x.

"I ask not for Thy love, nor e'en so much
As for a hope on Thy dear breast to lie;
But be thou still my Shepherd—still with such
Compassion as may melt to such a cry,
That so I hear Thy feet and feel Thy touch
And dimly see Thy face ere yet I die."

Before the end he came to a firm and happy confidence.

And who is there to be ranged upon the other side? What front-rank scientists have declared that the fundamentals of Christian faith are incompatible with a correct interpretation of the phenomena of nature? Professors Tyndall and Huxley, Haeckel—especially Haeckel—and perhaps three or four more; we do not recollect the names of even so many. Haeckel's works are of course violently anti-God and anti-Christian, and have been translated and distributed broadcast for that very reason by interested parties; but modern science has long since ceased to take him seriously, and he has been convicted of falsifying the facts of embryology in some particulars to fit his theories. Sir James Crichton Browne, the eminent specialist in mental diseases, says, "The fact is that Haeckel, with all his avidity and subtlety, cannot get rid of God, but merely substitutes for a Wise and Divine Creator an inane fetish of his own, which he labels Substance." Sir Oliver Lodge, also speaking of Haeckel, says, "He is, as it were, a surviving voice from the middle of the nineteenth century; he represents, in clear and eloquent fashion, opinions which were then prevalent among leaders of thought—opinions which they themselves in many cases, and their successors still more, lived to outgrow; so that by this time Prof. Haeckel's voice is a voice of one crying in the wilderness, not as the pioneer or vanguard of an advancing army, but as the despairing shout of a standard-bearer, still bold and unflinching, but abandoned by the retreating ranks of his comrades as they march to new orders in a fresh and more idealistic direction." Prof. Wienel, of Jena, one of Haeckel's colleagues, also refers to him as a survival from the seventieth year of the nineteenth century—"only our half-educated public. . . . now listen to cant of this kind."

BOOKS

G. T. MANLEY—*The Views of Modern Science* (C.M.S.).

TABRUM—*Religious Beliefs of Scientists* (Hunter and Longhurst).

Most of the quotations in this chapter are derived from these sources. Rev. G. T. Manley was himself a Senior Wrangler.

CHAPTER XI

The Faith of the Masters of English Literature

IT is related that on one occasion Charles Lamb, together with some of his friends, including Leigh Hunt, Hazlitt, and other well known literary men of the nineteenth century, were discussing persons one would wish to have seen. All sorts of names were suggested, chiefly men and women famous in the annals of literature. Finally Lamb in his inimitable way suggested various names and lastly Judas Iscariot. Being challenged for his reason and having satisfied his company, he continued: "There is only one other person I can ever think of after this," but without mentioning a Name that once put on a semblance of mortality—"If Shakespeare were to come into the room we should all rise up to meet him; but if that Person was to come into it we should all fall down and try to kiss the hem of His garment." ¹

Any unbiassed student of the literature of our country cannot but be struck by the fact that there is a great Figure which is seldom missing throughout it all; start from the earliest beginnings, thread your way through those first literary efforts written in a language which we have to translate as though it were a foreign tongue; pass on to Chaucer and the mediaeval writers; consider Shakespeare and the Elizabethans right on to Francis Thompson or even Bernard Shaw, and you will find that great personality; sometimes it looms large and occupies the whole canvas, sometimes it appears at intervals, sometimes its presence is merely felt, but few indeed are the works where it fails to appear at all. This Personality is that of Christ, and Lamb was by no means alone when he put into words that reverence which fills the heart of the one who thinks of Him, who examines Him, even though, like Shelley, he at

¹ Lucas, *Life of Lamb*, Vol. I., p. 388.

first sees in Him no form nor comeliness. As we examine the witness of the English writers to the Personality of Christ it is to be hoped that our interest may be quickened and that we may gain some consciousness of the mighty Figure in the way before us.

First of all let us give at least a glance at the writers before the Norman conquest. From the days when Christianity was brought to our land by Augustine and his fellow-monks the idea of Christ seized upon the popular imagination. Within a very short time the artists began to depict Him on the rude stone crosses or on their illuminated manuscripts. The portrait was usually depicted as a joyous young warrior gladly marching forward to the fight with death and sin—it is the Christ of the catacombs, the gay and winsome figure of the Good Shepherd—"and on His shoulders not a lamb, a kid,"¹—rather than the suffering Christ or the helpless Child which filled the imagination of the mediaeval artist to the practical exclusion of any other conception.

We find very early that the old English poems, the authors of most of which are unknown to us, are concerned with the new religion. Cynewulf and Caedmon, whose names at any rate we know, concerned themselves almost entirely with these matters; and besides these we get such poems as the *Dream of the Rood*, where the subject of the crucifixion of Christ is dealt with in so earnest and affecting a manner that even now it stirs the emotions though eleven hundred years have passed since it was written.

Space will not allow us to consider all the mediaeval literary men until we reach the writings of Chaucer and Langland in the fourteenth century. Much of this work is dull, but occasionally a poem such as *Pearl* is found, wherein Christian thoughts and ideals transform the poem so that it glows with devotion.

William Langland, the fourteenth-century poet and contemporary of Chaucer, lived at a time when the official church was at a very low ebb. It had claimed and won an almost complete political supremacy. The kingdom of Christ had become the kingdom of this world, the church dignitaries were little more than politicians. Chaucer and Langland both give us pictures of the priests and monks of the time. Among the Canterbury pilgrims we find the hunting monk dressed in all the latest fashions of the day, the wanton friar and the hypocritical pardoner selling his pardons and his spurious relics to

¹ *Matthew Arnold's Works*, Globe Edition, p. 184.

all who were credulous enough to buy them. Against such as these Langland lifted up his voice, and at the end of his poem *The Vision of Piers Plowman* we get a passage which has few equals for sublimity in the whole of our literature. It is a vision of the crucified and risen Christ Who conquers death and the powers of darkness, binds Satan in chains and triumphs over evil. Love in the person of Christ is at last victorious, and the poet awakens from his vision to the sound of the joyous bells pealing forth the approach of a glorious Easter morning.

If we take a leap through the centuries until we come to Shakespeare it is not because we could not find other witnesses to the truth which is in Christ Jesus, but rather because space does not permit us to delay longer over the earlier poets. Of Shakespeare it is often said that he had no religion. But we do not have to look very deeply to find him imbued with Christian ideas and sentiments. One central truth, that of the Atonement, finds its place in several passages. Thus Clarence says to the men sent to murder him in the tower :

“ I charge you, as you hope to have redemption
By Christ's dear blood, shed for our grievous sins
That you depart and lay no hands on me.”

Richard III, Act I, Sc. 4.

Or again in *King Henry IV*. Pt. I he speaks of Palestine as

“ Those holy fields
“ Over whose acres walked those blessed feet,
Which fourteen hundred years ago were nailed
For our advantage on the bitter cross.”

Act I, Sc. I.

That the remedy for sin is a universal one we see from a line in *Henry VI*. Pt. 2.

“ Now by the death of Him that died for all.”

Act I, Sc. I.

It will perhaps be objected by some that it is not fair to take a speech which Shakespeare for dramatic reasons puts into the mouth of one of his characters, and claim it as expressing the ideas of Shakespeare himself. But in this particular instance we can point to his will as a proof that they were his own views as well. There we read :

“ First, I commend my soul into the hands of God my Creator ; hoping and assuredly believing, through the only merits of Jesus Christ my Saviour, to be made partaker of life everlasting.” ¹

¹ Dyce's *Shakespeare*, Vol. I., p. 151.

Such was the faith of the myriad-minded Shakespeare, the brightest light in the literary firmament. But he is only one among many to testify to his belief in Christ.

It is a remarkable fact that within eleven years of one another there should have appeared two such books as Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, and this too amid all the orgies which we naturally associate with the Restoration.

Milton at first contemplated writing a national epic on the subject of King Arthur, but gradually his ideas expanded and he conceived the tremendous plan of writing the epic of the whole human race. He would justify the ways of God to man. Surely it is a fact which cannot be lightly passed over that the Biblical account of the Fall, containing as it does the promise of the Messiah, has provided the subject matter for what many consider to be the greatest epic poem not only of our own but of any literature. The poem clothes its lofty argument with a dignity and majesty which it is not possible to parallel elsewhere. Of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* one has only to mention the name to realize how deeply it has buried itself into the very heart of the English-speaking nations. Bunyan, the converted tinker, seeks to tell others of the great truths for which he is suffering imprisonment, and there in the damp gloomy cell of Bedford Gaol he dreams a dream which has been the delight not only of the lowly and the simple but also of the learned and the great ever since.

Within a hundred years of its publication fifty-nine editions had appeared, and then as Dr. Bonar remarks, "the publishers left off counting." Since that day translations of it have been made into well over a hundred languages. It has been truly said of it that it follows the Bible from land to land as the singing of birds follows the dawn. Nor is it wonderful that it should be so, for its English is the simplest and most homely that any great writer has ever used. The writer had soaked himself in the phraseology of the authorized version of the Bible until its language coloured every sentence he penned.

It is worth noting here how great is the influence which the authorized version of the Bible has exercised upon all our writers. It would be almost impossible to take up the works of a single author from that day to this without noting familiar phrases from it. Nor is it merely since 1611 that familiarity with the Bible has been a noteworthy feature, for no one can read Chaucer without being struck by his numerous quotations from Holy Writ, which argues a very considerable acquaintance

with it. Take the Bible out of our literature and the whole glorious structure collapses like a house of cards.

Side by side with the Puritanism which continued to exist amongst the lower and middle classes, the return of Charles II was a signal for an outbreak of wildness and profligacy on the part of the Court and those who surrounded it. Milton spoke of the "Sons of Belial flown with insolence and wine," who wandered forth at night and by their cruel practical jokings and brutal treatment of women and undefended men made the streets unsafe after dark. The literature produced by the Court poets and dramatists can scarcely be equalled for profligacy and indecency. Of all the Court poets and wits none was more outspoken and shameless than John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester. He had a native grace and charm of manner, and was soon one of the boon companions of the "merry monarch." "The natural bent of his fancy" says Burnet, "made him so extravagantly pleasant that many, to be more diverted by that humour, studied to engage him deeper and deeper in intemperance, which at length did so entirely subdue him, that as he told me, for five years together he was continually drunk." ¹ But at last this brilliant young profligate who had so often jeered at religion in every form, and especially Christianity, began to see that the wages of sin is, in a very literal sense, death. At the age of thirty-one he became acquainted with Dr. Burnet, who argued with him so earnestly that he began to see the truth of the divine's faithful words. As a friend read to him the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah the light dawned, and he declared that "as he heard it read he felt an inward force upon him which did so enlighten his mind, and convince him, that he could resist it no longer. For the words had an authority which did shoot like rays or beams on his mind; so that he was not only convinced by the reasonings he had about it, which satisfied his understanding, but by a power which did so effectually constrain him, that he did ever after as firmly believe in his Saviour as if he had seen him in the clouds."

Nor was this mere talk; his conduct showed the sincerity of his repentance. He attempted to make reparation for all his wrong-doing and to get his obscene writings destroyed. At the age of thirty-three he died worn out by his evil life, but almost with his last words he declared his assurance of God's mercy to him through Christ.

¹ Bp. Burnet. *Some passages of The Life and Death of John, Earl of Rochester*, *passim*.

The change which came over our literature towards the end of the seventeenth century, and raised it from the low state of morality to which it had sunk, is due in a great measure to the efforts of two men, Richard Steele and Joseph Addison. Richard Steele began his literary work while an officer in the Coldstream Guards, with a little manual of devotion called the *Christian Hero*, wherein he seeks to show, for the benefit of his Colonel and brother officers, that no principles apart from those contained in the Scriptures will suffice a man. We are not surprised to find that "from being thought no undelightful companion, he was soon reckoned a disagreeable fellow" by his brother officers. The book, however, can hardly claim to be anything other than a very dull affair, and perhaps his reward was not altogether undeserved. But he was a man of stern and unyielding devotion to the task he had set before himself. The influence of Steele, and later on of Addison, in purifying the muddy stream of our literature at this time, cannot be overestimated. Dr. Johnson spoke loudly in praise of Addison's high moral aim. "As a teacher of wisdom he may be confidently followed. His religion has nothing in it enthusiastic or superstitious; he appears neither weakly credulous, nor wantonly sceptical; his morality is neither dangerously lax, nor impractically rigid. All the enchantment of fancy, and all the cogency of argument, are employed to recommend to the reader his real interest, the care of pleasing the Author of his being."¹ It was Addison who on his death-bed called for his erring stepson, the young Lord Warwick, in order that he might see in what peace a Christian can die!

It is somewhat remarkable that in such a chapter as this we are able to include the most important figure in English philosophy; yet such is the case. John Locke, the author of the *Essay concerning Human Understanding* was also the author of an essay on the *Reasonableness of Christianity*. In this book he determined, he tells us, to put aside all commentaries, and by an unaided study of the New Testament to discover its teaching to an unbiassed reader. Two great facts he found clearly taught all the way through—faith in the Lord Jesus and repentance. The reasonableness of Christianity consisted in the fact that it declared God's unity to all people, and it put into the grasp of those who could not attain to morality through reason, a power by which they could fulfil the ideals they sought after.

On one occasion a young man asked him this question,

¹ Dr. Johnson: *Life of Addison*.

"What is the shortest and surest way for a young man to attain the true knowledge of the Christian religion?" The great philosopher made reply, "Let him study the Holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament; therein are contained the words of eternal life. It has God for its Author; salvation for its end; and truth without any mixture of error for its matter."¹

Dr. Samuel Johnson was throughout his life a man who had the strongest respect for the Christian faith, a respect which in some cases sounds almost strange nowadays. No one can glance even hastily at Boswell's life without getting that impression. But he was always haunted by a great fear of death. It is interesting therefore to learn that when he actually lay dying he at first showed signs of much agitation, but later on became quite composed and continued so to the end.

"For some time" we read in Boswell "before his death, all his fears were calmed and absorbed by the prevalence of his faith, and his trust in the merits or propitiation of Jesus Christ. He talked often to me about the necessity of faith in the sacrifice of Jesus as necessary beyond all good works whatever for the salvation of mankind." "The great man," said one of his friends, writing of the closing scene, "died as he lived, full of resignation, strengthened in faith and joyful in hope."²

The name of William Cowper will always be associated with the revival of faith which took place toward the end of the eighteenth century. He is a strange figure, and very few have really sympathetically attempted to understand him. On the one hand a set of literary critics are all too ready to dismiss him as a great poet spoilt by religious fanaticism, largely due, as they say, to the baneful influence of his friend John Newton, while on the other hand those who are deeply in sympathy with his religious feelings are tempted to glose over those strange periods when he lost all hope—when "obscurest night involved the sky."

The most popular poet of his time, and the best of English letter-writers, was the verdict of the poet Southey. We are not likely nowadays to underestimate his importance as a literary landmark in the development of English poetry, and as heralding the approach of the Romantic Revival. There is an increasing interest in Nature and a broadening sympathy with one's fellow-man; especially for such as are downtrodden in the press of life.

¹ John Locke: *Posthumous Works*, p. 344.

² Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Oxford Edition, Vol. II. 645.

But in this chapter we are more concerned with Cowper the theologian or rather the Christian poet. His early life was spent in a gay rather than industrious preparation for his life-work. He was called to the bar in 1754, and for some years lived a comparatively idle life in London. He was very much in love with a cousin, but her father did not approve of the match, and the result was that Cowper was first attacked by that terrible melancholy which in his later years gathered like a black cloud over his sky. For some time in 1763 he was under the care of a certain Dr. Cotton at St. Albans. Dr. Cotton was a deeply pious man, and as Cowper's mind gradually cleared, the Doctor used to encourage him to read the Bible. One day, flinging himself into a chair, the poet took up a Bible to look in it for comfort. His eyes lighted on the words "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God." "Immediately," he said, "I received strength to believe and the full beams of the Sun of Righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement He had made, my pardon sealed in His blood, and all the fulness and completeness of His justification. In a moment I believed and received the gospel. . . . Unless the Almighty arm had been under me I think I should have died with gratitude and joy."

Cowper undoubtedly had this incident in his mind when he penned the well-known lines :

"I was a stricken deer that left the herd
Long since : with many an arrow deep infixed
My panting side was charged, when I withdrew
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
There was I found by One Who had Himself
Been hurt by the archers. In His side He bore
And in His hands and feet the cruel scars."¹

Cowper's life after this is a succession of sunshine and gloom. At times he is deeply conscious of the power of God in Christ Jesus, not only to save him but to keep him ; at other times he is cast into abysmal doubt. Yet it is to be noticed that he never doubted the power of God to save ; it was only that his unhappy mental condition prevented him from believing that God could, or rather would keep *him* to the end. In his happier moments he wrote some of the noblest hymns we possess, such as "God moves in a mysterious way," "Hark, my soul, it is the Lord," "Sometimes a light surprises," "Jesus,

¹ Cowper : *The Task*, Bk. 3, lls. 108-114.

where'er Thy people meet," hymns which are to be found in every collection. Mrs. Elizabeth Barrett Browning has written a beautiful poem called *Cowper's Grave*. The whole poem should be read in this connection; the following are three verses:

- " Like a sick child that knoweth not his mother while she blesses
And drops upon his burning brow the coolness of her kisses,
That turns his fevered eyes around. . . . My mother, where's my
mother ?
As if such tender words and deeds could come from any other ! "
- " The fever gone, with leaps of heart he sees her bending o'er him,
Her face all pale with watchful love, the unwearied love she bore him,
Thus woke the poet from the dream his life's long fever gave him,
Beneath those deep pathetic eyes which closed in death to save him."
- " Thus ? Oh, not thus ! No type of earth can image that awaking,
Wherein he scarcely heard the chant of seraphs round him breaking,
Or felt the new immortal throb of soul from body parted,
But felt those Eyes alone, and knew, ' My Saviour ! *not* deserted ! ' "

No student of the poems of William Wordsworth can fail to be struck by the atmosphere of piety and religion which pervades them, but it is not easy to quote passages which give voice to certain definite beliefs. The reason for this is explained to some extent by a letter which he sent to a friend who was mourning the death of his daughter: " The consolation which children and very young people who have been religiously brought up draw from the Holy Scripture ought to be habitually on the mind of adults of all ages, for the benefit of their own souls, and requires to be treated in a loftier and more comprehensive train of thought and feeling than by writers has been usually bestowed upon it. . . . I wish I were equal to anything so holy, but I feel that I am not." ¹

This expression of his reluctance to deal with the holiest truths of Christianity is expressed elsewhere. But nevertheless we get fleeting references to show that these thoughts and truths were dear to him though unexpressed, as in the little poem on a gravestone in Worcester Cathedral, on which was inscribed the single word " *miserrimus* " (most wretched one).

" Stranger Pass," he says,
" Softly ! to save the contrite, Jesus bled."

It will suffice to quote the words of Stopford Brooke; " It was in this faith that Wordsworth lived and died. It was in

¹ These scattered references could be multiplied, but see *Wordsworth's Memoirs*, II, 363.

deep belief in God and immortality, and in a Saviour from sin, that he passed his quiet days, and found peace far from the strifes of men. It was in the calm, alike removed from stormy passion and from the disturbing lusts of the world, that this faith gave him, that he wrought out and lived the high morality which he has given to us in the *Ode to Duty*, in the fine strain of the *Happy Warrior* and in many noble passages in the *Excursion*.

As age grew on, his calm deepened ; nor was he without joy in the midst of calm ; there was no stagnant water in the deep lake of his heart ; such poems as the *Ode to Duty* and others are filled with a resolute and exalted joy, and there were times when, as the old man prayed, his delight was transfigured ;

" I bent before Thy gracious throne,
And asked for peace on suppliant knee,
And peace was given . . . nor peace alone,
But faith sublimed to ecstasy." ¹

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, friend and contemporary of Wordsworth, was throughout his life a believer in Christianity. In his *Biographia Literaria* he speaks with gratitude of three writers who during his wanderings through the wilderness of doubt, enabled him to "skirt without crossing the sandy deserts of utter unbelief." On his death a series of letters remained in MS. which were afterwards published dealing with the Inspiration of the Scriptures. At the beginning he defines his beliefs in the following summary manner. The Creation and Formation of the heaven and earth by the Redemptive Word ; the Apostasy of Man ; the Redemption of Man ; the Incarnation of the Word in the Son of Man ; the Descent of the Comforter ; Repentance ; Regeneration ; Faith ; Prayer ; Grace ; Communion with the Spirit ; Conflict ; Self-abasement ; Assurance through the righteousness of Christ ; Spiritual Growth ; Love ; Discipline ; Perseverance ; Hope in Death. . . .

"In all these," he adds, "the sky of my belief is serene, unclouded by doubt." And again, speaking of the Bible, he declares : "In the Sacred Volume the hungry have found food, the thirsty a living spring, the feeble a staff, and the victorious wayfarer songs of welcome and strains of music ; and as long as each man asks on account of his wants, no man will discover

¹ Stopford Brooke, *Theology in the English Poets*. Everyman Library, p. 232.

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ought amiss or deficient in the vast or many-chambered storehouse." ¹

John Ruskin is one of those great writers whose whole outlook on life was based on the Bible instruction he received in his boyhood. No one who studies his works in detail can fail to realize that it was a careful and constant study of the Authorized Version which gave him that mastery over a simple, lucid, incisive prose style which ranks him amongst the greatest prose writers of the century. Of his knowledge of the Bible let him speak for himself. It is an extract from *Praeterita*, the last book Ruskin ever wrote. "I have next, with deeper gratitude, to chronicle what I owe to my mother for the resolutely consistent lessons which so exercised me in the Scriptures as to make every word of them familiar to my ear in habitual music, yet in that familiarity revered, as transcending all thought and ordaining all conduct. This she effected not by her own saying or personal authority; but simply by compelling me to read the book thoroughly for myself. As soon as I was able to read with fluency, she began a course of Bible work with me, which never ceased till I went to Oxford. She read alternate verses with me. In this way she began with the first verse of Genesis and went straight through, to the last verse of the Apocalypse; hard names, numbers, Levitical law, and all; and began again at Genesis the next day." Ruskin in his later days got away somewhat from the simple faith of his youth, but in the end he reached a position in which he could say "That is what we want, to be delivered from our sins. We must look to the Saviour to deliver us from our sins. It is right we should be punished for the sins which we have done; but God loves us and wishes to be kind to us, and to help us, that we may not wilfully sin." ²

During the middle of the nineteenth century, there grew up a great optimism amongst thinkers and writers. Science had been making rapid strides and it was felt that it would not be long before all sin and sorrow would depart with the advance of knowledge, and a millennium would soon arrive. Especially was this the case about the time of the great Exhibition of 1851. The point of view is well illustrated in Tennyson's *Locksley Hall*, where he describes the "heavens filled with commerce," when the war-drum throbbed no longer, where—

¹ *Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit*, Ed. by H. N. Coleridge. Pickering, 1840.

² *The Religion of Ruskin*, Burgess, p. 59.

"The common sense of most shall hold a fretful world in awe ;
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law."

But needless to say they were doomed to bitter disappointment, and as war and suffering seemed to grow rather than lessen, many thinkers began to doubt the great truths of Christianity, and to satisfy themselves with a materialistic creed based upon a type of science which we associate particularly with the name of Tyndall.

This point of view is reflected in the writings of the period, and nowhere more clearly than in the works of Tennyson. Unlike Arnold and Clough he did not fall into the greatest depths of despair. Like Paul with beasts, he fought with death. More particularly did he fight for belief in the Immortality of the soul. He came to the conclusion that at the end of all things reasoning was futile—

"We have but faith ; we cannot know ;
For knowledge is of things we see."

His attitude towards Christianity came to be that of a man who found in it those great fundamental truths for which he felt an insuperable need. The poem written on the death of his friend Arthur Hallam, and called *In Memoriam* was long in process of construction. It seems up to a large extent the way he went, the doubts he encountered, until he arrived at the position which is summarized in the portion of the poem which, though written last, was put at the beginning to form a prologue :

"Strong Son of God, Immortal Love,
Whom we that have not seen Thy face
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove."

* * * * *

"Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood Thou ;
Our wills are ours, we know not how ;
Our wills are ours, to make them Thine."¹

For him the great proof of the Divinity of Christ lay in His life.

" . . . The Word had breath and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought."²

¹ *In Memoriam*, Prologue.

² *Ibid.* xxxvi.

Tennyson was a great believer in prayer. He used to say, "Prayer is, to take a mundane simile, like opening a sluice between a great ocean and our little channels, when the great sea gathers itself together and flows in at full tide."¹ We should indeed be grateful that amid all the darkness of the latter part of the nineteenth century the poet maintained a witness to the things that are not seen, and at the end of his long and useful life could speak those familiar words of quiet confidence which have so often been wilfully misinterpreted by those who only know the voice of noisy boastfulness:—

"For though from out our bourne of time and place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar."■

It has been pointed out by many that no modern poet has so deep a knowledge of the Bible as Robert Browning. Not only did he quote from the well-known books, but also from the writings of the Minor Prophets, of which the average man in the street knows extremely little. Thus in the *Ring and the Book* we find quotations from Jonah, Micah, Habbakuk, Zechariah, and Malachi. This at any rate proves an interest in Scripture. But when we come to study the beliefs of Browning in any detailed way, we must always bear in mind that he was like Shakespeare in being so dramatically accurate that he never put his own views into the mouths of his characters unless they were such as the character he is drawing would be likely to hold. But in spite of this we can, by a study of his letters, learn what Browning's own views were, so as to be pretty sure what he himself believed. One of the truths which he held most dear was the doctrine of the Incarnation. This fact we gather from his letters, and even without these we could infer it from his deep enthusiasm when he deals with the subject in his poems, notably in the *Epistle of Karshish*, *Saul*, and *A Death in a Desert*. Karshish is an Arab physician supposed to live about the time of our Lord; he meets Lazarus, and discusses his case in a letter to his master, Abib, declaring that he is suffering from madness as the result of an epileptic trance from which he had been roused by a Nazarene physician. He relates how this madman declared that he was healed by none other than God Himself, Who came to this world, and "dwelt in flesh on it awhile!" He however dismisses the idea as a mere madman's

¹ *Memoir by Hallam, Lord Tennyson*, Vol. I. 324.

² *Crossing the Bar*.

raving, and returns to the much more important matters of his science connected with the "blue-flowering borage," which he has found. But the startling truth of the possibility of such an Incarnation returns again and again to the mind of the physician until at last he bursts forth into the wonderful lines :—

"The very God ! think, Abib ; dost thou think ?
So, the All-Great were the All-Loving too.
So, through the thunder comes a human voice
Saying, ' O heart I made, a heart beats here !
Face my hands fashioned, see it in Myself !
Thou hast no power nor mayst conceive of Mine,
But love I gave thee, with Myself to love,
And thou must love Me Who have died for thee ! '
The madman saith He said so ; it is strange."

In *Saul* too we get the same exuberant joy at the thought of the Incarnation. David is playing before Saul, seeking to drive away the evil spirit which possesses him. After having tried to rouse Saul by the record of earthly and human blessings, he is seized with a spirit of prophecy and realizes that God is perfect, not only in His works but in His love. If David in his love for Saul would create him anew, surely God is both able and willing to do so, and the means by which this gift will be bestowed will be by the Atonement in which God's love, "the weakness in strength," shall open the gates of new life.

" 'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for ! my flesh that I seek
In the Godhead ! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee ; a Man like to me
Thou shalt love and be loved by, for ever : a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee ! See the Christ
stand ! "

So to Browning the great and crowning point of the story of Christ was the death on Calvary, that

" Transcendent act
Beside which even the creation fades
Into a puny exercise of power."

This life then is a probation, wherein our failures are but the promise of a fulfilment in a wider and deeper existence to follow, so that even a man like Saul the mistake, Saul the failure, the ruin he seems now, may put his trust in Christ and awaken from the dream of life

" . . . to find himself set
Clear and safe in new light and new life."

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Nothing can be lost for the believer ; all that makes up life, all the many imperfections of this existence, will be perfected in eternity. Abt Vogler, the musician, expresses this when he regrets the disappearance of the " palace of music " he has built himself :

" Therefore to whom turn I but to Thee, the ineffable Name ?
Builder and maker Thou, of houses not made with hands !
What, have fear of change, from Thee Who art ever the same ?
Doubt that Thy power can fill the heart that Thy power expands ?
There shall never be one lost good ! what was, shall live, as before :
The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound ;
What was good, shall be good, with, for evil so much good more ;
On the earth the broken arcs ; in the heaven a perfect round."

Thus we see that Browning, too, may be reckoned amongst the believers who have found satisfaction in the message of Christ. Nor would we suggest that the poets whom we have chosen here and there are by any means the only believers in the long array of literary names. We could have spoken of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, of Christina Rossetti and Francis Thompson, had space permitted. We have no wish to bolster up faith by a mere list of names. Nevertheless it is an encouragement to find that artists and statesmen, philosophers and poets have found the power to live and die in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

BOOKS

WORDSWORTH—*Shakespeare's Knowledge and Use of the Bible.*

ROBERTS—*The Jesus of the Poets and the Prophets.*

STUBBS—*The Christ in English Literature.*

CHAPTER XII

The Moral Choice

WE believe that some reader who has patiently travelled with us thus far, if he is not already a Christian, may find himself not wholly convinced by the arguments advanced, and yet ready to allow that there is a *prima facie* case, that there is, shall we say, a fifty per cent or even a fifty-one per cent probability that the teaching of Jesus Christ is true. But he has already come to a resolve never to own himself a Christian until the probabilities in favour reach a hundred per cent. So the Jew philosopher-turned-cynic argues in Kingsley's *Hypatia* : " My dear Sir, I am sick of syllogisms and probabilities and pros and contras. What do I care if, on weighing both sides, the nineteen pounds weight of questionable arguments against are overbalanced by the twenty pounds weight of equally questionable arguments for? Do you not see that my belief of the victorious proposition will be proportioned to the one overbalancing pound only, while the whole other nineteen will go for nothing? No, my worthy Sir, I want a faith past arguments. . . . I want a faith which will possess me."

Now, this demand on God for a proof positive, a mathematical demonstration before we will believe, is illogical, impertinent, and contrary to the whole of His purpose in revelation. How much more befitting is the prayer already referred to, recommended to Justin Martyr—" Pray before all things that the gates of light be opened to you, for (the truths of revelation) are not comprehensible by the eye or mind of man, unless God and His Christ give him understanding." God gives just so much light as is needful, not to force a decision, but to present a reasonable intellectual choice, by an act of the will.

" God stooping shows sufficient of His light
For us in the dark to rise by. And I rise." ¹

¹ Browning : *The Ring and the Book*, VII, 1845.

It is perfectly true that to many Christians everything does seem as clear as day ; there are a hundred per cent. arguments pro and none contra ; their faith possesses them. But that is the result of personal experiment *after* making their choice. Faith has stepped out on the seeming void. . . . and found the rock beneath.

Is it not just so that all great scientific discoveries, wonderful engineering inventions, and memorable business ventures have been made ? There is no proof positive as yet ; there is enough to risk a trial, even if it involve a laborious and costly research or enterprise, and men dare ! Read in this connection the story of Christopher Columbus launching out in faith based on a certain amount of evidence, to find a new world.

Ah, but that is not all, when *this* choice is to be made or refused. It is not only an intellectual yes or no to a theory that is in question, which can be decided in a cold-blooded way. Men and women have made this choice, oftener than not, in a tumult of emotion, and that not only in crowded meetings, but in solitude ; witness Augustine's passionate struggle in his garden in Milan in the year 387 ; his pleasant vices plucking him by the sleeve with their " Dost thou part with us for ever ? " the child's voice singing " Tolle, lege ; tolle, lege—take up and read," and the verse of Paul's letter to the Romans that opened up before him, " Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *make not provision* for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof " ; and *that* meant making a clean break with a woman he loved.¹

For " believing," in the New Testament sense of the word, is not only an intellectual assent to facts (though it does involve that) ; it is a moral choice, a choosing of right rather than wrong, of light rather than darkness ; and because Christ is the personification and the apotheosis of right and light, it means choosing to become a disciple of His. It was disciples who were called Christians at Antioch, and no one but a disciple, a learner, a follower, has a right to the name to-day. See how, in John iii. the " believing " of verse 16, the Magna Carta of all gospel texts, is not a believing of theological or historical facts, but is believing on a Person, that is, accepting Him for oneself in full character, for exactly what He claimed to be—God, Master, Atoning Saviour. See how the moral choice is emphasized in the succeeding verses ; it is the man who is willing to choose

¹ We ought to apologize for curtailing the wonderful story to such a bare mention. See Augustine's *Confessions*, or the long excerpt in Backhouse and Tylor's excellent *Witnesses for Christ* (Simpkin, Marshall & Co.).

the right who comes to the light, believes. Believing and rendering obedience are interchangeable terms, see verse 36 (R.V.). Compare this with Romans x. ; here all the stages are set out in detail. God sends a preacher ; a man hears, then believes, then calls on the name of the Lord (the Master), and whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved—and " If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved " (Rom. x. 9, R.V.) Sometimes, in fact usually in the Acts, the same moral choice is presented from a different point of view, and repentance is joined with faith ; but the right-about-face, the exchanging of the old life for the new service to the new Master is the same. What makes the urgency of this call to decision is, that it involves the question of submission to, or rebellion against, God, the invisible King. Therefore eternal destinies hang on the answer.

Strange it is to notice what differing prescriptions we hear from teachers and preachers as to the one thing needful. One says, " Go to a penitent form or an inquiry room " ; another, " Believe that Jesus died for your sins " ; another, " Give up your sins and lead a correct moral life " ; another, " Join such and such a church " ; and yet another, " Be confirmed and take the sacrament." The truth is that every one of these decisions has brought life and joy and liberty to some men, because, perhaps subconsciously, other conditions were already fulfilled in them, but not one of them is a whole presentation of the message of the gospel as the Apostles preached it.

One thing needs to be made crystal clear ; it is that seeking to do one's duty to one's neighbour, or religious observances such as church attendance, baptism, confirmation, taking the sacrament, or a correct moral conduct, or repentance without faith in Jesus Christ as God, Lord and Atoning Saviour, are all absolutely unavailing. If anyone thinks otherwise, let him make a careful list for himself of the clear statements in the gospels and epistles as to what a man must do to be saved, or to become a disciple or a Christian. Then write down some of the contrary statements, as " By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified " and " All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." If anyone thinks that John vi. 53 refers to the Sacrament, let him observe that it was not yet instituted, and that a comparison of verses 40 and 54 makes it clear that what is meant is the inward reality, the receiving of Christ by faith, of which taking the Bread and Wine is the outward sign. The moral choice that God demands, nay, commands, and on which

salvation depends, is a personal acceptance by faith of the Lord Jesus Christ in His full character, as God, Lord, and Atoning Saviour. When a man sees Christ dying for his sins, believes it, and accepts Him as "my Lord and my God," all the ingredients that go to make up repentance are present, for has he not had a glimpse of the guilt of his sin, and is he not signed on under a new and sin-hating Captain?

As we have seen, mere intellectual considerations, overweight of arguments on one side or the other, seldom in real life decide the issue in this moral choice. Let us in a few sentences put down the actual forces that engage in a tug-of-war for the soul face to face with a decision. If they are dragged out into the light, it is easier to give them their true value. Human affection is often a factor, and may be a strong one, but it acts variably; it may influence the choice towards Christ, or against Him. What are the main forces against? Inertia; many people never come to *any* important decision until they are forced to move. A mixture of pride and cowardice, that dreads to join up with an unpopular cause. A determination to have one's own way, and not God Himself shall thwart it. A fixed intention to "get on" if not by fair means, then by foul. A selfish desire to go all out for a life of pleasure. Love of some sin. What a sordid list.

And what motives pull the other way? The longing for a better life, morally. Though awful things have been done in the name of religion by misguided men, it is safe to say that no man has ever been made worse by an enlightened following of Christ, and millions have been made better. The sincere desire to serve the neediest of one's own generation, and there is nothing so powerful to help them as the Christian message. Anxiety to know that the sins of one's past life are pardoned, and that there can be the happiness of peace with God. But surely the appeal of Christ Himself is the strongest pull of all. Suppose even that the arguments for Christianity are only sufficient to establish a one in four probability in favour—what if the one in four chance should turn out after all to be true? That one should have at last to stand before the bar of God's judgment in the life beyond the grave, to explain to Him, or even to explain to one's own conscience, just *why* one had allowed the Only begotten Son of God to die for one's sake and yet had not given Him grateful worship and service? It would all look so pitifully mean. How all the butterfly interests we had chased instead would crowd back in a reproachful memory! And what if all He said about the eternity of

the human soul, either enjoying the light of God's presence, or in an outer darkness where there is—we will not finish the quotation—what if it all proved to be true? “As the tree falls, so it shall lie.”

It is possible to become a Christian without holding any particular theory of inspiration, and without troubling to form an opinion about the historicity of Moses or the prophets. But when a man *has* made the moral choice, his new allegiance must surely lead him to give most respectful consideration to his Master's appreciation of the divine origin and inspiration of the Old Testament, and by implication of the New. This surely becomes a test of loyalty. There will be, once again, arguments for, and arguments against, and it is always difficult to avoid subjective considerations in arriving at a decision, but if the Master's attitude has been thoughtfully weighed, one of His loyal disciples should not allow himself to be prejudiced against the Bible by any fine-drawn critical theories, nor should he start off with the conclusion that a prophecy must of necessity be written after the event, nor that if the Bible conflicts with some ancient historian or monument, the latter is more likely to be correct than what Jesus Christ described as the Scripture which cannot be broken.

A personal testimony may be quoted here; that of Dr. Howard Kelly, Professor of Gynaecology at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, one of the most famous surgeons in America, and almost equally well-known and esteemed in this country. “I have, within the past twenty years of my life, come out of uncertainty and doubt into a faith which is an absolute dominating conviction of the truth and about which I have not a shadow of doubt. I have been intimately associated with eminent scientific workers; have heard them discuss the profoundest questions; have myself engaged in scientific work, and so know the value of such opinions. I was once profoundly disturbed in the traditional faith in which I have been brought up—that of a Protestant Episcopalian—by inroads which were made upon the book of Genesis by the higher critics. I could not gainsay them, not knowing Hebrew or archaeology well, and to me, as to many, to pull out one great prop was to make the whole foundation uncertain.

“So I floundered on for some years trying, as some of my higher critical friends are trying to-day, to continue to use the Bible as the Word of God, and at the same time holding it of composite authorship, a curious and disastrous piece of mental gymnastics—a bridge over the chasm separating an older and

Bible-loving generation from a newer Bible-emancipated race. I saw in the Book a great light and glow of heat, yet shivered out in the cold.

"One day it occurred to me to see what the book had to say about itself. As a short, but perhaps not the best method, I took a concordance and looked out 'Word,' when I found that the Bible claimed from one end to the other to be the authoritative Word of God to man. I then tried the natural plan of taking it as my textbook of religion, as I would use a textbook in any science, testing it by submitting to its conditions. I found that Christ Himself invites men to do this (John vii. 17).

"I now believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God, inspired in a sense utterly different from that of any merely human book.

"I believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, without human father, conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary. That all men, without exception, are by nature sinners, alienated from God, and when thus utterly lost in sin, the Son of God Himself came down to earth, and by shedding His blood upon the cross paid the infinite penalty of the guilt of the whole world. I believe he who thus receives Jesus Christ as his Saviour is born again spiritually as definitely as in his first birth, and, so born spiritually, has new privileges, appetites and affections; that he is one body with Christ the Head, and will live with Him for ever. I believe no man can save himself by good works, or what is commonly known as a 'moral life,' such works being but the necessary fruits and evidence of the faith within. . . .

"Perhaps one of my strongest reasons for believing the Bible is that it reveals to me, as no other book in the world could do, that which appeals to me as a physician, a diagnosis of my spiritual condition. . . . I believe in it because it reveals a religion adapted to all classes and races, and it is intellectual suicide knowing it not to believe it."

We do not suggest that the approval stamped by the Lord Jesus Christ on the Bible is such as to force our acceptance of every verse in it even if an error could be proved; faith never flies in the face of truth. We are willing to make all allowance for a little uncertainty and inaccuracy here and there in the transmission of the sacred text; and for the fact that revelation is gradual and progressive from Genesis to Revelation, so that neither the morality nor the theology of Jacob or David is on the same plane as that of Paul or Timothy; we admit that tradition is not infallible as to the human authorship of certain

books. But we do plead, in view of Christ's attitude to the Book and its own claims, and the moral power and purity of its influence even when the location of the writer was a sink of iniquity like Rome, or Patmos, or Corinth, or Jerusalem under Zedekiah, that it should be given a fair hearing as inspired of God, and not refused on account of miracle, or prophecy, or contradiction by a secular historian, or some modern literary theory such as the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis.

And finally, if the Christian has definitely come to the decision that the Bible is the Word of God for him, what follows but that it becomes his unfailing guide, which must at all costs be obeyed? In his ecclesiastical position, in the church in which he worships, he must not look for human traditions or for popularity or all that appeals to the intellect and emotions in making his choice, but simply be guided by what the New Testament teaches. For us of the modern generation, the distinctions between sect and sect—Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, etc.—which we have inherited from our grand-parents are of relatively little importance compared with the attitude of one congregation and another to the historic faith, by which we mean the old gospel of man's ruin, redemption, and regeneration by faith, and the acceptance of the Bible as the inspired and authoritative Word of God, which no man has any right to add unto or to take away from. The crucial difference between professing Christians to-day is not relating to matters of church government or ordinances, but it lies here; some hold rigidly to the historic faith, and others accept only a modernized version of it which we fear neither the great British preachers of the past five hundred years, nor the leaders of the Reformation to which we owe so much, nor the Apostles themselves, would have recognized. We call it crucial, because Jude tells us that the faith was "once for all delivered unto the saints"; if so, every man puts himself in the wrong who tries to modify it in any way, whether he be an early Father, or a modern church dignitary. Paul wrote to the Galatians, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema," and to the Thessalonians, "If any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man, that ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed."

The Book will have a say, too, as to the Christian's earthly relationships and moral conduct as a master or a servant or a member of a community or family; it will guide as to the use of

his time and money and recreations. So the Word of God becomes, as was intended by the Divine Author, a lamp unto our feet, compared with which every human guidance, whether it be an organized church, or a dominant teacher, or our own unilluminated conscience or intellect, is as a will-o'-the-wisp. And we find again, that besides the intellectual decision whether we will believe in the Bible or no, there is a moral choice. Our conception of right and wrong will have to be tested by the Book, and we must act accordingly.

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